



What aspects of social capital in the family unit influence the socialisation process of students on the Northwest of Tasmania?

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Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Teaching, Master of Education

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the

Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

University of Tasmania

July 2016

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STATEMENT OF ETHICAL CONDUCT

The research associated with this thesis abides by the international and Australian codes on human and animal experimentation, the guidelines by the Australian Government's Office of the Gene Technology Regulator and the rulings of the Safety, Ethics and Institutional Biosafety Committees of the University.

Wayne Anthony Roberts

ABSTRACT

Rural students located on the Northwest Coast of Tasmania are less likely to participate in higher education than their urban counterparts (ABS, 2011a). Despite considerable research, and reforms in education systems and in schools to overcome discrepancies between urban and rural higher education participation rates, the participation gap remains. A growing body of work indicates family attitudes are the dominant influence on young people's academic success and aspirations for further education. This research employed the methodology of multiple case studies to construct a comprehensive picture of the influence of characteristics of social capital in the family unit on the learning process of students on the Northwest Coast of Tasmania.

Drawing on theories of social and cultural capital, this study has two main findings. First, that a young student's bonding social capital — specifically, the presence or absence of an academically successful role model in the family — plays a significant role in shaping their embodied cultural capital through their knowledge and beliefs, agency and self-efficacy, and post-secondary expectations via a complex interplay of processes. Second, it was possible to access bridging social capital and to intervene in the processes of the accumulation of embodied cultural capital. Through the use of in-depth interviews and a Year 12 student questionnaire (n = 6) and parent/guardian questionnaire (n = 6), the research explores young people's pre-existing knowledge of, beliefs about, and aspirations towards learning and further education, and identifies the key influences on their habitus.

Bonding social capital emerged as an important factor on the construction of a student's attitude and focus towards learning and future tertiary education. The causes of these phenomena were multiple and interconnected, with interaction with academically successful role models, access to accurate information and life all having an encouraging effect.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people have provided me with assistance and inspiration during my journey. This PhD would not have been possible without their support and I am indebted to them all.

I must first acknowledge and thank my three main supervisors: Dr. Claire Hiller, Professor John Williamson and Dr. Robbie Johnston. I very much appreciate Dr. Hiller's initial discussion and development of the project with me of this topic to which I immediately felt strongly drawn. I thank Professor Williamson, who constantly challenged me to look more deeply and to go a step further. I thank Dr. Johnston, whose focused feedback and no-nonsense approach have been invaluable.

I am sincerely grateful to all the participants in this research who gave so freely of their time and allowed me a glimpse into their worlds. Without their generosity this project would not exist.

Finally, I would like to thank my wife, Nona, and my children, Eli, Amos, Liliana, and Abraham, whose eternal patience and unswerving faith in me have sustained me throughout.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY	II
AUTHORITY OF ACCESS	II
STATEMENT OF ETHICAL CONDUCT	II
ABSTRACT.....	III
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	IV
TABLES AND FIGURES.....	XII
GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS, TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS.....	XV
PREFACE	XVI
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.0 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND	2
1.2 RESEARCH BACKGROUND	3
1.3 THEORETICAL POSITION	6
1.3.1 Constructivist theory	6
1.3.2 Bourdieu's thinking tools.....	7
1.3.3 Constructivist grounded theory.....	7
1.4 RESEARCH QUESTION AND OBJECTIVES	8
1.4.1. Rationale for the research objectives.....	8
1.4.2 RO1 What influence does the geographic location of the Northwest Coast of Tasmania have on the development of social capital?	9
1.4.3 RO2: What are the outcomes of family social capital for students?.....	10
1.4.4 RO3: What social capital mechanisms influence engagement of students with the learning process?	10

1.4.5 RO4: <i>How do social capital mechanisms influence the development of specific personal identity traits in students?</i>	11
1.4.6 RO5: <i>How does a student enact their subjectivity traits in the learning process?</i>	12
1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY	13
1.6 KEY CONCEPTS	14
1.6.1 <i>Cultural capital</i>	14
1.6.2 <i>Social capital</i>	14
1.6.3 <i>Habitus</i>	15
1.7 RESEARCH APPROACH	16
1.8 METHODOLOGY	17
1.9 DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES	17
1.9.1 <i>Interviews</i>	18
1.10 DATA ANALYSIS	18
1.11 THESIS STRUCTURE	18
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW	20
2.1 INTRODUCTION	20
2.2 UNDERSTANDING FAMILY, SCHOOLING AND TRANSITION TO POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION.....	20
2.3 BOURDIEU’S THEORY OF SOCIAL PRACTICE	22
2.3.1 <i>Habitus</i>	22
2.3.2 <i>Forms of capital</i>	23
2.3.3 <i>Symbolic Capital/Power and Violence</i>	25
2.3.4 <i>Field</i>	27
2.3.5 <i>The forms of capital utilised in the research</i>	30
2.4 CULTURAL CAPITAL	30
2.4.1 <i>Embodied cultural capital</i>	31

2.4.2 Embodied cultural capital: knowledge and beliefs.....	32
2.4.3 Embodied cultural capital: self-efficacy and aspirations.....	33
2.5 SOCIAL CAPITAL.....	34
2.5.1 Bonding, bridging and linking forms of social capital	35
2.5.2 Strong and weak ties.....	37
2.5.3 Social networks and social capital.....	39
2.5.4 Informal networks of family and friends	39
2.5.5 Casual relationships and interactions	40
2.6 OUTCOMES: GETTING BY AND GETTING AHEAD.....	41
2.6.1 Bonding social capital and getting by	42
2.6.2 Bridging social capital and getting ahead.....	43
2.7 ROLE OF BONDING SOCIAL CAPITAL IN DEVELOPING HABITUS.....	44
2.7.1 Bonding social capital and self-efficacy	44
2.7.2 Bonding social capital and identity	45
2.7.3 Bonding social capital and conversations	46
2.7.4 Bonding social capital and experience	47
2.8 THE ROLE OF BRIDGING SOCIAL CAPITAL IN CHANGING HABITUS	48
2.8.1 The role of real-world experiences in changing habitus.....	49
2.8.2 Reproduction and social change	51
2.8.3 Cross-field effects	52
2.8.4 Bourdieu and site effects.....	55
2.9 CONCLUSION	58
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY	59
3.1 INTRODUCTION	59
3.2 PERSPECTIVES ON THEORY AND DESIGN	59
3.2.1 Perspective on knowledge: constructivist theory.....	59

3.2.2 Bourdieu on methodology	60
3.3 RESEARCH APPROACH	62
3.3.1 Limited mixed methods approach	64
3.4 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH: THE ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER	65
3.5 RESEARCHER IDENTITY	66
3.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	67
3.7 ETHICAL APPROVAL	69
3.8 SELECTION OF RESEARCH LOCATION	69
3.8.1 Gaining access to the location and participants	70
3.8.2 Sampling	71
3.9 DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES	72
3.9.1 Participant observation	73
3.9.2 Interviews	74
3.9.3 Questionnaires	75
3.9.4 Documents	75
3.9.5 Data recording	76
3.10 DATA ANALYSIS	76
3.11 VERIFYING THE RESEARCH FINDINGS	79
3.12 CONCLUSION	80
CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS	81
4.1 INTRODUCTION	81
4.2 CONSTRUCTIVIST GROUNDED THEORY	81
4.3 LINE-BY-LINE CODING	82
4.4 INITIAL CODING	82
4.5 AXIAL CODES AND CATEGORIES	85
4.5.1 Category 1 — focused on future educational and career outcomes	86

4.5.2 Category 2 — unfocused application of educational self.....	87
4.5.3 Category 3 — teacher influence on student participation and achievement....	87
4.5.4 Category 4 — family social interaction	88
4.5.5 Category 5 — parental influence on student actions.....	88
4.5.6 Category 6 — religious values and beliefs.....	89
4.5.7 Category 7 — important to have a social life.....	89
4.5.8 Category 8 — peer influence on student values and application at school	90
4.5.9 Category 9 — influence of participation in sport on student	90
4.5.10 Category 10 — student reflexivity on values.....	91
4.6 THEME CODING.....	91
4.6.1 Theme of future self	92
4.6.2 Theme of unfocused	93
4.6.3 Theme of teacher influence	94
4.6.4 Theme of family.....	96
4.6.5 Theme of student social values	97
4.6.6 Theme of peer involvement.....	98
4.7 QUESTIONNAIRE.....	99
4.8 FAMILY QUESTIONNAIRE	99
4.8.1 Section A — demographic	100
4.8.2 Section B — social capital information	101
4.9 STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE	105
4.10 COMPARISON BETWEEN FAMILY AND STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRES	109
4.11 CONCLUSION	110
CHAPTER 5: SOCIAL CAPITAL	112
5.1 INTRODUCTION	112
5.2 BONDING SOCIAL CAPITAL: THE ROLE OF PARENTS	113

5.2.1 Parental occupation	113
5.2.2 Parents as role models	114
5.2.3 Parents as ‘Don’t do what I did’ role models	115
5.2.4 Parental support.....	116
5.2.5 Personal encouragement	116
5.2.6 Economic influence.....	117
5.2.7 Parents as a source of information	120
5.2.8 Practical intervention	121
5.2.9 Pressure	123
5.3 SIBLINGS AS ROLE MODELS	124
5.4 THE INFLUENCE OF PEERS.....	125
5.4.1 Peer aspiration	125
5.4.2 Vocational education	127
5.4.3 The influence of peers summarised.....	128
5.5 BONDING SOCIAL CAPITAL SUMMARISED	128
5.6 BRIDGING SOCIAL CAPITAL — TEACHERS.....	128
5.6.1 Teachers as a source of information	129
5.6.2 Teachers as a source of encouragement.....	130
5.6.3 Teachers as role models and inspiration.....	131
5.7 OTHER ROLE MODELS.....	132
5.8 ROLE MODELS AS INSPIRATION.....	133
5.9 ROLE MODELS IN THE MEDIA	135
5.10 CONCLUSION	136
CHAPTER SIX: CULTURAL CAPITAL.....	138
6.1 INTRODUCTION: EMBODIED CULTURAL CAPITAL.....	138
6.2 FAMILY CONVERSATIONS	138

6.3 CONVERSATIONS AMONG PEERS.....	141
6.4 PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS	143
6.4.1 <i>Goal orientation and work ethic</i>	144
6.4.2 <i>Pragmatism</i>	146
6.4.3 <i>Self-efficacy</i>	147
6.5 CONCLUSION	149
CHAPTER 7: TOWARDS A THEORY OF INTERVENTION.....	151
7.1 INTRODUCTION	151
7.2 THE ROLE OF BONDING SOCIAL CAPITAL IN DEVELOPING EMBODIED CULTURAL CAPITAL	152
7.3 BONDING SOCIAL CAPITAL AS ROLE MODELS	156
7.4 BONDING SOCIAL CAPITAL AS SOURCE OF SUPPORT.....	158
7.5 BONDING SOCIAL CAPITAL PROVIDING FINANCIAL SUPPORT.....	159
7.6 BONDING SOCIAL CAPITAL PROVIDING CONVERSATIONS AND INFORMATION	160
7.7 THE IMPACT OF BONDING SOCIAL CAPITAL ON EMBODIED CULTURAL CAPITAL SUMMARISED	161
7.8 CHANGING PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS: GOAL ORIENTATION, WORK ETHIC AND PRAGMATISM	164
7.9 CHANGING PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS: SELF-EFFICACY AND AGENCY.....	164
7.10 CHANGING ASPIRATIONS AND EXPECTATIONS	166
7.11 AN EMERGING THEORY	168
7.12 CONCLUSION	173
CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS	174
8.1 INTRODUCTION	174
8.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS	174
8.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY.....	176
8.4 IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY FOR EQUITY OF ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION	177
8.5 IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY.....	177
8.6 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRACTICE AT HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS	178

8.7 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCHOOLS.....	179
8.8 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH	181
8.9 CONCLUSION	182
CHAPTER 9: REFERENCES.....	183
APPENDIX A: ABS SOCIAL CAPITAL FRAMEWORK	193
APPENDIX B: INFORMATION SHEET FOR PRINCIPAL	194
APPENDIX C: STATEMENT OF INFORMED CONSENT: (PRINCIPAL)	196
APPENDIX D: INFORMATION SHEET FOR STUDENT	198
APPENDIX E: STATEMENT OF INFORMED CONSENT (STUDENT)	200
APPENDIX F: INFORMATION SHEET AND INFORMED CONSENT (TEACHERS)	202
APPENDIX G: STATEMENT OF INFORMED CONSENT (TEACHER)	205
APPENDIX H: INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARENT/CARER/GUARDIAN	207
APPENDIX I: CONSENT FORM FOR PARENT/CARER/GUARDIAN	209
APPENDIX J: FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR TEACHERS	211
APPENDIX K: ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE WITH STUDENTS.....	212
APPENDIX L: OBSERVATIONAL SCHEDULE	213
APPENDIX M: SOCIAL CAPITAL QUESTIONNAIRE (PARENT)	214
APPENDIX N: SOCIAL CAPITAL QUESTIONNAIRE (STUDENT).....	218

TABLES AND FIGURES

FIGURE 2.1: BONDING AND BRIDGING SOCIAL CAPITAL	36
TABLE 2.1 SOCIAL CAPITAL IN A MULTI-LEVEL MATRIX.....	37

FIGURE 2.2 RESOURCES AND OUTCOMES	40
FIGURE 3.1 ABS REMOTENESS STRUCTURE MAP (ABS).....	70
TABLE 4.1: EXAMPLE OF INITIAL CODING	82
TABLE 4.2 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS: CODES AND FREQUENCIES.....	84
TABLE 4.3 AXIAL CODING AND CATEGORIES	85
TABLE 4.4 THEMES.....	92
TABLE 4.5 PARENTAL DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION	101
TABLE 4.6 EIGHT SOCIAL CAPITAL SUB-SCALES.....	102
TABLE 4.7 FAMILY LIKERT SCALE FREQUENCY COUNT	103
TABLE 4.8 SIMILAR PERCEPTIONS AMONG FAMILIES	104
TABLE 4.9 DIFFERENT PERCEPTIONS AMONG FAMILIES.....	104
TABLE 4.10 SOCIAL CAPITAL SCORES FOR FAMILIES (F = FAMILY).....	105
TABLE 4.11 STUDENT FREQUENCY COUNT	106
TABLE 4.12 SIMILAR PERCEPTIONS BETWEEN STUDENTS	106
TABLE 4.13 DIFFERENT PERCEPTIONS BETWEEN STUDENTS.....	107
TABLE 4.14 STUDENT SCORES ON THE FIVE SOCIAL CAPITAL SUB-SCORES (S = STUDENT)	107
TABLE 4.15 SIMILAR PERCEPTIONS BETWEEN FAMILIES AND STUDENTS.....	109
TABLE 4.16 DIFFERENCES IN PERCEPTIONS BETWEEN FAMILIES AND STUDENTS.....	110
TABLE 5.1 PARENTAL OCCUPATION (N = 6 PARENTS)	113

FIGURE 7.1 THE IMPACT OF BONDING SOCIAL CAPITAL ON KNOWLEDGE OF, BELIEFS ABOUT, AND EXPECTATIONS FOR, POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION: YOUNG PEOPLE FROM MIDDLE TO HIGH SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUNDS.	154
FIGURE 7.2 THE IMPACT OF BONDING SOCIAL CAPITAL ON KNOWLEDGE OF, BELIEFS ABOUT, AND EXPECTATIONS FOR, POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION: YOUNG PEOPLE FROM LOW SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUNDS	155
FIGURE 7.3 PROPOSED MODEL OF INTERVENTION.....	171

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS, TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ATAR	Australian Tertiary Admission Rank
CEO	Catholic Education Office
HECS	Higher Education Contribution Scheme
HEEP	Higher Education Equity Program
HSC	Higher School Certificate
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SS	Senior Secondary (Years 11 and 12)
SES	Socio-economic status
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
TCE	Tasmanian Certificate of Education
UTAS	University of Tasmania
VET	Vocational Education and Training
Secondary level:	This term refers to year or grade levels 7 to 10, or 7 to 12 (Years 11 and 12 are also referred to in Tasmania more specifically as Senior Secondary).
CEO:	The Catholic Education Office is the Catholic body responsible for the provision of primary and secondary education for Catholic students within each Diocese across Australia.
State school:	The term 'State' or 'government' school is often used in Australia to refer to a 'public', as distinct from a 'private', school. Australian state governments traditionally provide the bulk of the funding for 'public' schools, and the Federal/Commonwealth Government in turn contributes the bulk of government funding provided to 'private' schools.

PREFACE

Without writing a biography or a complete “sketch for a self-analysis” (Bourdieu 2008, p. 23) to give the reader some background behind the motivations of this thesis, I will describe how this area of study became of interest to me and led eventually to my doctoral research. My interest in habitus and life chances springs from observations of my own friends from high school in the town of Torquay on the North West Coast of Tasmania, a town with widespread social and economic problems. After attending a school that had many parallels with what Willis (1977) describes in his classic study, most of my mates followed their fathers into very similar fields and careers, with professional fathers producing professional sons, and sons of fathers in blue-collar jobs also following suit. This occupation distinction seemed to be maintained, although most of the occupations were within the local paper mill.

For example, there is Oliver, now a mechanical engineer, whose father is an electrical engineer. Peter’s dad was a manager at the local paper mill, and Peter is now the manager of a large accounting firm. Steve’s dad is a retired carpenter at the paper mill and Steve is now a carpenter at a local building business. Gerard and his dad are both truck drivers and both involved in the union movement. There are many more of these examples; yet there are also a few exceptions. For instance, Julian’s dad is a retired professional fisherman, while Julian is now a primary school teacher. And then there is me. First, I followed the blue-collar path, as my dad was a gardener on the local council, and when I left school I became a trainee horticulturist in an apple orchard. Why I chose this as a career I am still unsure, but at the time I had no interest in university study and was keen to have some money. Also, I knew I had a very good chance of getting a traineeship due to my subject grades in the Higher School Certificate and excellent references from school. A number of my friends were also heading in this direction.

I think I made a lifestyle choice more than a career choice; yet in hindsight it seems a rather strange decision because I had no real interest in trades or manual work in general. I suppose because I had no definite idea of what I wanted to do other than playing cricket and socialising with mates, and it seemed the way to go. It just seemed like the normal choice. Yet I quickly realised I did not want to be a horticulturist for the

rest of my life. As there was virtually no work to do in the so-called on-the-job training, I started to read a lot while at work, which contributed to where I am now.

Therefore, I originally followed the father-son trajectory of most of my friends, yet now, as a current university graduate in Education, I am an exception to it. Once I began studying social theory, my own observations and experiences made Bourdieu's notion of *habitus* alluring, as it describes the reproduction of social class while being pragmatic enough to allow for exceptions. In retrospect, the trajectory from an apprentice horticulturist to Education doctoral candidate was a winding, non-linear road. Between 1991, when I left the orchard, and the end of 2000 when I finished my Education degree, I worked as a casual bar attendant, a cellar hand, an apple grader, and electorate officer in a political office. For the past 13 years, I have worked as a teacher at the local Catholic Secondary College.

These experiences and observations, and the observation of similar experiences of those around me, made me think analytically about what was happening to young people as a social category in Australia. These, and many more experiences and observations led to my current interest in the sociology of youth, class and culture. Later, I came to appreciate that all those experiences pertained to *habitus*. It is these experiences that have led to what I believe is an empathetic understanding and feel for class issues that are the motivation for this research, frame its methodology and focus its discussion.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This thesis, *What aspects of social capital in the family unit influence the socialisation process of students on the Northwest of Tasmania?*, reflects a study which aimed to provide background knowledge for educators, teachers and parents working with adolescents on the Northwest Coast of Tasmania. The researcher (and author), while employed as a high school teacher on the Northwest Coast of Tasmania, felt the adolescents he taught had some unique educational challenges.

Rural students located on the Northwest Coast of Tasmania are less likely to participate in higher education than their urban counterparts (ABS, 2011a). Despite considerable research and reforms in education systems and in schools to overcome discrepancies between urban and rural higher education participation rates the participation gap remains. Previous research (Abbott-Chapman, 2001, 2011; Kilpatrick & Abbott-Chapman, 2007; Kilpatrick & Loechel, 2004) has centred on identifying the barriers to participation and putting forward strategies to remove or alleviate barriers. The present research takes a different approach by focusing on the students' perspectives and aspects of their lives that influence engagement, participation at school and future higher education options. It focuses attention on research undertaken by Bourdieu (1986, 1987, 1988, 1990, 2008) that demonstrates family factors have an important influence on educational participation and achievement. The research extends the investigation beyond the family and into the community, examining the influence and impact of others living in the regional area on the students' post-secondary aspirations and achievement.

This chapter begins with a discussion on the economic, population and cultural contextual background of the research location and site. An overview and explanation of the researcher's theoretical position is then provided to position the research. The main research question and research objectives are examined to define their theoretical underpinnings and the significance of the study is explored. The chapter ends with an overview of the thesis structure.

1.1 CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND

A Senior Secondary College environment with students typically aged between sixteen and nineteen years was identified as being the most appropriate source of participants for a questionnaire for this research. The Senior Secondary College chosen for this study is situated on the island of Tasmania. This island is in an isolated position in the Southern Hemisphere, located 240 kilometres south-east of the mainland of Australia and 2000 kilometres from Antarctica. It is the smallest of the six states and two territories of Australia - 67 800 square kilometres - and the Southern Ocean, Tasman Sea and Bass Strait encircle it. Over one third of the state's forests are reserved in World Heritage Areas or in National Parks. The history of the state's settlement as an English penal colony dates back to the early 1800s, but the Tasmanian Aboriginal ancestors first reached the island 40 000 years ago.

At the time of writing, there are 500 000 people living in Tasmania, with nearly half that number living in the capital city of Hobart (population 203 600; ABS, 2011b) in the south of the island. Launceston, in the north, is the second largest city (population 98 500; ABS, 2011b). Tasmania, as part of the Commonwealth of Australia, has its own democratic government with two Houses of Parliament and is also represented within the two sections or Houses of the Australian Government, situated in Canberra.

The Northwest Coast has a population of around 109 153 (ABS, 2011b) which is distributed between the cities of Burnie and Torquay and many other small towns. Rural activities predominate in all regions with a diversity of temperate climates: regional products from crops, sheep and cattle rearing, fruit growing, vineyards, timber milling and salmon farming. Industrial activities include mining and smelting, wood chipping, manufacture of woollen products, vegetable processing, papermaking, brewing, and manufacture of cement and cement products.

This research was conducted in Torquay, a rural city located on the Northwest Coast of Tasmania. With a population of approximately 25 500, Torquay is classified as outer regional Australia, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics Remoteness Structure Map (ABS, 2011a; Appendix A). Torquay is serviced by five primary schools and three high schools. Senior secondary education can also be undertaken at two colleges located in the city.

This study's research location was Caritas Catholic College. Caritas has existed as a school at its current site for over fifty years. In 1990 the college extended its student cohort to include senior secondary education. At the time of the research, the college had a student population of 704 students and a suitable intake of 189 senior secondary students. The students attending the college come from the city of Torquay and outlying country areas.

1.2 RESEARCH BACKGROUND

This thesis developed and maintained its inspiration from the writings of many researchers during the research process (Abbott-Chapman, 2001, 2011; Abbott-Chapman & Kilpatrick, 2001; Falk, 1997, 2001a, 2001b, 2002; Falk & Kilpatrick, 2000; Kilpatrick, 2003, 2007, 2013). Abbott-Chapman and Kilpatrick (2001) identify six main post-secondary pathways for students, which pointedly influenced participation and completion of Year 12. The pathways included those identified as traditional post-secondary careers to jobs, which are irregular professions and which look more like a "mosaic than a set of pathways" (p. 60). Young adults in rural such as the Northwest Coast of Tasmania have fragmented occupations which replicate inferior contact with higher education and slender job opportunities. Local employment openings are normally in small supply (Abbott-Chapman & Kilpatrick, 2001; Abbott-Chapman, 2011).

Abbott-Chapman (2011) contends the categories of rural and remote present "a plethora of definitional possibilities" (p. 61) to city based researchers, who frequently label such areas as having significant economic and geographical shortfalls. Consequently, young people are viewed in negative ways and observe themselves in relation to these undesirable ways. As a result, aspirations of students from rural and regional area potentially might be restricted by these ideas (Kilpatrick & Abbott-Chapman, 2002). Young people in such areas tend towards educational opportunities where they feel contented and relaxed and "will fit in, so tending to exclude themselves from some study opportunities and locations" (Abbott-Chapman, 2011, pp. 61–62).

Rural and regional young people experience opposing influences of having to leave home to undertake relevant education and employment opportunities in the larger cities on one hand, and, on the other, the desire to reside in the local area to be close to supportive family and friends. Push and pull factors affect not only choices

made but also emotional responses to them, in situations of cost and benefit which are by no means clear-cut (Abbott-Chapman, 2011).

In the traditional meritocratic pathway, high achievement dominated explanations for tertiary entry, but an early Australian study (Teese, 2000) characterised entry into higher education as dependent on four conditions: aspiration, achievement, access and availability. Certainly some universities have initiated a range of schemes to enable entry to bright students from low socio-economic status (SES) schools with limited university. These strategies have focused on individual students rather than the group and hence their effect has been limited.

The Bradley Report (2008) called for system change and this cannot be achieved through the actions of a few individuals. Noting Appadurai's (2004) claim that "aspirations are never simply individual", there comes a necessary realisation that aspiration is culturally linked (p. 67). A sense of entitlement leads some young people to aspire to tertiary learning without needing to think about it as it is so much a part of their taken-for-granted world, in Bourdieu's (1984b) terms, part of their habitus, whereas for others aspiration has to be learned and cultivated before it can become part of a shared view.

Seen in this way, the capacity to aspire is not evenly distributed within society but operates as a dimension of social division. Given the preponderance of tertiary students coming from some middle class schools and the very limited numbers from others (low-SES schools) it would appear that aspirations are produced and maintained within the group. Hence, there is potential for treatment at the group or school level as well as at the level of individual student. University-school partnerships offer one way of working towards greater aspirations from particular schools, thus making university more accessible to first generation students. The meritocracy has survived by celebrating individual achievement in ways that do not seriously challenge the role of education in the production and maintenance of social and academic elites (Corbett, 2001, 2004, 2007, 2015) argues that while there are real structural and economic factors at play in terms of the streaming of talented young people out of their rural home communities, there is also something much less visible than the lack of work or poor infrastructure. He argues it is the discourse of leaving or mobility capital, which

conditions some young rural people's experience regarding out-migration that is a not-so-silent actor. The learning to leave is what functions as one of the most powerful elements in young people's understanding of their structure of opportunities and it mitigates their conceptualisation of embedded or 'disembedded' selves (Corbett 2007). Corbett (2007) puts forward that this conditioned need for mobility, seen as imperative for survival in the modern economy, is a very real and active factor in why and how certain young people construct future life plans as away from and separate from their rural home communities. This brings new light to the view of 'uneven development' in that it:

... locates ... sources of class power rather than in the immediacy of, say, a lack of jobs; and it points to the fact that the nature and not merely the degree, of uneven development can change over time ... spatial form and geographical location are themselves significant in forming the character of particular social strata. Thus the very fact of social relations being stretched out over space (or not), and taking particular spatial forms, influences the nature of the social relations themselves, the divisions of labour and the functions within them (uneven development). Social change and spatial change are integral to each other (Massey, 1994, pp. 22-23).

Corbett (2007) also proposes the notion of "localized capital", whereby some students actually prefer to stay in their communities. Leaving is more fraught than staying, particularly if the family has 'invested' localised capital:

As a possibility (rather than an inevitability), post-secondary education is weighed against other choices that involve options for staying. Youth in this position generally have family connections and opportunity to stay on and work in the traditional resource industries (p. 784).

These traditional resource industries include, for example "social networks, embodied fisheries, related cultural capital, and the economic capital of fishing licenses, quota, and gear" (2007, p. 784). In the Northwest Coast of Tasmania, other traditional resource industries include grazing, farming and dairy product production. This locates capital as being place-based, and that students can possess capital by virtue of the valuable and exchangeable nature of this capital – but only within specific local communities.

1.3 THEORETICAL POSITION

The theoretical position of the researcher influences the research focus, determines the research priorities, and shapes the method and techniques required for the research process (Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005). For this reason, it is important to relate the researcher's ontological and epistemological position to the research aims and questions, as well as the methodological principles that inform the processes of data collection and analysis. Symes (1992) explains "theories are like lenses, magnifying certain quarters of inquiry and diminishing others" (p. 36).

1.3.1 Constructivist theory

Reflections upon assumptions of reality led to the identification with the constructivist epistemological position there is no objective truth or meaning to be discovered, but that meaning is constructed (Creswell, 1998, 2003, 2005, 2009; Crotty, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, 2005; Wiersma & Jurs, 2009). Crotty (1998) defines constructivist theory as the belief that,

... all knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, developed and transmitted within an essentially social context (p. 75).

This position accepts there can be a variety of meanings given to the same phenomenon by different people, who construct meaning depending on their social and cultural backgrounds and experiences. This position allows a researcher to look for multiple and complex views rather than narrowing meanings into few categories or ideas. The researcher can "rely as much as possible on the participants' views of the situation being studied" (Creswell, 2003, p. 8).

Social constructivism holds there is an inevitable historical and socio-cultural dimension to the construction of meaning as we develop against a backdrop of shared understanding, practices and language. The use of the social constructivist view allowed the researcher to investigate personally the variety of influences upon students located on the Northwest Coast of Tasmania to enact their identity in the form of engagement with the academic process. As is alluded to above, an interpretation of data is made which is coloured by personal experience and background.

These views about the nature of meaning making are aligned with the interpretivist method, which looks for “culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social world” (Crotty, 1998, p. 67). They contrast with the positivist approach, which seeks to discover natural laws so people can predict and control events (Creswell, 2009, p. 91).

1.3.2 Bourdieu’s thinking tools

Bourdieu’s concepts of fields, habitus and capital (Bourdieu, 1977, 1984a, 1984b, 1989, 1990, 1993a, 1993b; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977) are proposed as devices for the analysis of the practices observed in this investigation. According to Calhoun, Li Puma, & Postone (1993), Bourdieu offers thinking tools for considering both social structures and local practices. They claim:

Bourdieu treats social life as a mutually constituting interaction of structures, dispositions, and actions whereby social structures are embodied, therefore situated, knowledge of those structures produce enduring orientations to action which, in turn, are constitutive of social structures. Hence, these orientations are at once structuring structures and structured structures; they shape and are shaped by social practice (Calhoun, Li Puma, & Postone, 1993, p. 4).

Bourdieu’s concepts are principally valuable for this research because of the situated nature of the culture under examination. Bourdieu’s work provides this study with language to describe the games of social interaction in Torquay, by recognising the relationship of these games with the social structures around them.

1.3.3 Constructivist grounded theory

Constructivist grounded theory allows a methodical coding process to be adapted to the data to identify patterns and themes. Through the processes of separation, sorting and synthesising, the data are assembled into a qualitative form of coding, which condenses the data and allows the investigator to make judgments with other data collected from the research site. Through investigating the data, contrasting the data and writing memos, constructivist grounded theory allows the codes to conceptualise into analytic categories, which not only coalesce upon further interpretation, but become more theoretical as the process engages in further levels of analysis (Charmaz, 2006). The analytic categories, and the conceptual relationships

identified between them, assist in “building levels of abstraction directly from the data that culminate in an abstract theoretical understanding of the studied experience” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 4).

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTION AND OBJECTIVES

The overarching question of this thesis is “*What are the influences of characteristics of social capital in the family unit on the learning process of students on the Northwest of Tasmania?*” This question was then allied to key research objectives in order to provide a wide locus for the investigation of the lives of senior secondary students. Key research objectives were then identified from the literature review with research objectives 1 – 5 used as a basis for the analysis of the questionnaire and interview data in Chapters 4 and 5.

The Research Objectives (RO) are:

RO1: What influence does the geographic location of the Northwest Coast of Tasmania have on the development of social capital?

RO2: What are the outcomes of family social capital for students?

RO3: What social capital mechanisms influence engagement of students with the learning process?

RO4: How do social capital mechanisms influence the development of specific personal agency traits in students?

RO5: How does a student enact their subjectivity traits in the learning process?

1.4.1. Rationale for the research objectives

The literature review provided a variety of topics and information about factors influencing rural adolescent participation and achievement in the field of education. The researcher was able to reflect on the key aspects of rural adolescent lives, which linked to form the tenets of pathway of influence for the formation of student subjectivity. This pathway had the potential to reveal rural students’ positive understanding of self and subjectivity, attitudes, aspirations and future plans, but it also placed conditions that restrained their lives and placed expectations upon them.

1.4.2 RO1 What influence does the geographic location of the Northwest Coast of Tasmania have on the development of social capital?

This purpose of this objective was to ascertain whether broad geographic features impacted on student performance. As Falk (2002) rightly identifies, in the gloss “caused by the electronic age’s glittering array of new technological tools, it tends to be forgotten”(p. 32) that people still live and work in places, and these places are geographic communities. Personal networks may be more extensive, diverse and fast than before, but an individual’s physical body is always and irretrievably in one place at a time. Personal identities are defined by who and what they come in contact with, and through what medium (Falk, 2002). Whether interacting in a game of football on the weekend, communicating to friends on Facebook, or pressing a point in a staff meeting at work, people are located and interacting in a place, at a particular time, about something, and using various texts and technologies to do so.

As previously identified, the concept of geography in this thesis is viewed in terms of a social structure and Bourdieu’s thinking tools rather than a strict physical area. Bourdieu prefers the terms ‘field’ and ‘social space’ to the over-generalised notion of society (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 16). For Bourdieu, the relationship between structure and agency takes place in social fields. The concepts of ‘field’ and ‘habitus’ are therefore relational in the sense they function fully only in relation to each other (Bourdieu 1984a, 1984b, 1986, 1988, 2002). Bourdieu (1986) defines social fields as the “the structure of the social setting in which habitus operates” (p. 117). A field may be of any size and any importance. The fields relevant to this thesis project are those with influential prior studies using Bourdieu, such as education (Naidoo, 2004; Lingard, Rowolle & Taylor, 2005; Zipp & Brennan, 2003); rural identity (Benson, 2006; Champagne, 2004; Hesmondhalgh, 2006); and rural economics and politics (Chopra, 2003; Widick, 2003; Aldridge, 1998). As Bourdieu notes, “there are ... as many fields of preferences as there are fields of stylistic possibilities” (1984a, p. 226).

1.4.3 RO2: What are the outcomes of family social capital for students?

This study proposes one of the main ways in which a student's social capital influences their likelihood of going to university is through its influence on their beliefs and aspirations, here construed as components of an individual's cultural capital. According to Bourdieu and Passeron (1977), the accumulation of cultural capital starts early in a person's life. Through the primary pedagogic work of the family, a basic predisposition towards learning is established in a child. These predispositions are defined as habitus, or embodied cultural capital. The core proposition is that a young person's embodied cultural capital, specifically their knowledge and beliefs about and aspirations towards learning, is shaped early in their lives by their bonding social capital, the connections in their immediate social worlds.

1.4.4 RO3: What social capital mechanisms influence engagement of students with the learning process?

Granovetter (1973) distinguished between strong and weak social ties, and observed that different styles of interaction provide differential access to resources. Strong ties, normally shaped by kinship or friendship, generate a sense of belonging, security, and identity. Weak ties, shaped through irregular interaction with people external to one's direct social sphere, allows individuals to access resources that may be influential in improving one's social station.

Applying this idea to collective contexts, Putnam (2000) makes use of the terms 'bonding' and 'bridging' social capital, from Gittell and Avis' (1998) distinction. Bonding social capital is located in networks fashioned from "perceived shared identity relations where individuals form connections with others like themselves" (Szreter & Woolcock, 2004, p. 576). These networks are, by definition, inward looking and exclusive. Bridging social capital, however, refers to associations where members are drawn from a wide range of backgrounds. It is therefore outward looking and more inclusive (Putnam, 2000).

Bourdieu pointed out that the social capital of the poor is primarily of the bonding type. This bonding social capital provides essential solidarity and emotional support, but is of limited use in assisting people to move into worlds outside their immediate social sphere (Putnam, 2000, p. 22). Rather, it serves to lock them into it as

they associate predominantly with others in the same position as themselves, thereby reinforcing a narrow set of possible identities. Bridging social capital, on the other hand, exposes people to others in different positions to themselves. Thus, it can generate relationships with persons or institutions that can give them access to broader identities and to resources and other forms of capital that are lacking in their own environment (Putnam, 2000, p. 23).

Within the contexts of this thesis, a student's parents, siblings and school friends are construed as components of their bonding social capital, while academically successful role models from outside their immediate social sphere are construed as bridging social capital. This research proposes that a student's bonding social capital limits their habitus, which requires intervention from outside their immediate social sphere to be altered. It also suggests that academically successful role models such as schoolteachers can act as the bridging social capital needed to help young people to expand their horizons. This bridging social capital allows them to access resources such as information, identities and motivation, which may be instrumental in facilitating their transition to university by transforming their habitus.

1.4.5 RO4: How do social capital mechanisms influence the development of specific personal identity traits in students?

The roles of bonding and bridging social capital influence the development of specific identity traits in students in the form of a changed habitus. This thesis suggests that, while individual characteristics and education structures play a role, it is primarily through the influence of bonding social capital in the form of the immediate social world that critical knowledge, beliefs and aspirations are established in young people. This operates in several ways. First, the presence or absence of academically successful role models affects their self-efficacy and identity. Second, conversations among family and peers, coupled with differential modes of parental support, shape their understanding of university entry and the university experience. Finally, opportunities to experience the world of university shape these beliefs about university life and work. In combination, these factors determine the extent to which young people will consider university as a realistic option for themselves.

As bridging social capital literature indicates, while families provide the strong ties, it is often the diligent efforts of mentors outside the family such as teachers and councillors, who form the weak ties necessary to make the difference. “Decisive in the constellation of factors that determined their educational success was the active presence of persons mediating between themselves and institutionally structured opportunities” (Fernandez-Kelly, 2002, p. 73).

For Bourdieu, a special mode of inculcation is required if the secondary pedagogic work (in this case, a university intervention) is to bring about the complete substitution of the primary habitus for another which he termed a radical conversion, or *metanoia*, as opposed to simply confirming the primary habitus. He suggests the possibility of the effect of an extraordinary event, a critical moment in shaping thinking about future prospects:

It is the critical moment when, breaking with the ordinary experience of time as a simple re-enactment of a past or a future inscribed in the past, all things become possible (at least apparently), when future prospects appear really contingent, future events really indeterminate (Bourdieu, 1988, p. 182).

1.4.6 RO5: How does a student enact their subjectivity traits in the learning process?

In the social and physical discursive spaces of Torquay, identities are negotiated and renegotiated in the context of diverse fields of practice. The young people of Torquay are constructing identities that are moulded by physical and institutional discourses of gender, sexuality, age and many other fields of practice. Their regional setting is subject to fast modification, compelling them to embrace flexibility in their identity constructs. In this thesis, practices of specific students in this community are inspected while remaining sensitive to the impact of the institutional structures beyond it. According to Calhoun, Li Puma, and Postone (1993), Bourdieu offers thinking tools for considering both social structures and local practices. Calhoun *et. al.* state,

... Bourdieu treats social life as a mutually constituting interaction of structures, dispositions, and actions whereby social structures and embodied (therefore situated) knowledge of those structures produce enduring orientations to action which, in turn, are constitutive of social structures. Hence, these orientations are at once structuring structures and structured structures; they shape and are shaped by social practice (Calhoun, Li Puma, & Postone, 1993, p. 4).

Bourdieu's ideas are particularly useful for this research because of the situated nature of the culture under examination. Bourdieu's work provides this study with a language to describe the games of social interaction in Torquay, thereby acknowledging the interface of these games with the social structures around them.

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study into the influence of characteristics of social capital in the family unit on the learning process of students on the Northwest of Tasmania is significant on a number of levels. First, it aims to make a contribution to our understanding on grounds of social inclusion. The rural population of the Northwest Coast of Tasmania continues to be under-represented in Year 12 completion rates and higher education (ABS, 2011a). A university qualification is increasingly a pre-requisite to enter many fields and thus can have an enormous impact upon an individual's life chances. Having a degree reduces the likelihood of being unemployed by 60% (Gillard, 2008) and, on average, increases earnings by around 36% (Coates & Edwards, 2009). It can lead to increased job satisfaction (Smith, 2007; Fabria & Vila Lladosa, 2007) and improved health and wellbeing (Hillman & McMillan, 2005).

Second, a key anxiety of numerous rural communities is population decline, particularly the decline in the numbers of teenagers, young adults and families, as they move away to larger centres for education, work and social opportunities (Eversole, 2001). Many regional communities are struggling to adapt to these changes and to find solutions to protect their economic and social future. Research and subsequent action would improve economic, social, and future educational opportunities within a region and so reduce the loss of the future population base.

Finally, the strength of parental levels of education as a predictor of young people's post-secondary destinations has led many to surmise that attitudes are the key; however, this notion remains largely un-theorised. The contribution of this study lies in its theorising of how beliefs about and aspirations for higher education are formed, and in what ways they can be altered. It stands with a small body of inquiry that attempts to reach beyond statistics to ascertain not only why inequitable rates of participation persist, but also what can be done to redress the imbalance. Ultimately,

the study suggests a framework that is both theoretical and evidence-based on which to build future interventions. The study also provides policy makers with a better-developed evidence base on which to devise and implement local policies.

1.6 KEY CONCEPTS

1.6.1 Cultural capital

Cultural capital is one of Bourdieu's most widely used analytical concepts. It covers a wide variety of resources including verbal facility, general cultural awareness, aesthetic preferences, information, educational credentials (Swartz, 1997, p. 75) and intangible inflections of style. For Bourdieu, cultural capital is an attempt to explain, "the unequal scholastic achievement of children originating from different social classes by relating academic success ... to the distribution of cultural capital between the classes and class fractions" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 243). Like other forms of capital, cultural capital is distributed unequally between different class groups. For this study, it is understood cultural capital is "differently formed in accordance with the different experiences and conditions of existence of the different social classes" (Bennett, Emmison & Frow, 1999).

1.6.2 Social capital

The term 'social capital' was applied to education in the 1980s by Coleman (1988a, 1998b) and Bourdieu (1986) separately. It refers to a variety of social resources linked to possession of a network of relationships, or membership in groups, which provide individuals with access to collectively owned capital, which may be useable (that is, converted into economic capital) in the short or long term (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 243). It is not so much a resource in itself, but rather, "a panoply of mechanisms that connect individuals to resources" (Fernandez-Kelly, 2002, p. 76). The core idea of social capital theory is that social networks have value, which can affect the economic and status standing of individuals (Bourdieu) and groups (Putnam, 2000, p. 19). It should be noted that, while both Bourdieu and Putnam explore the notion of social capital, the two operate from different reference points. While this thesis draws mainly on the seminal work of Bourdieu in constructing the framework of social capital and its impact

on cultural capital, this research makes some reference to Putnam's work, particularly his contribution of the notion of bridging social capital.

Bonding social capital denotes ties between people in similar situations, such as immediate family, close friends and neighbours. It produces strong 'in-group' loyalty. Bonding ties are described as the strong ties that develop between people of similar background and interests, usually include family and friends, provide material and emotional support, and are more inward looking and protective.

Bridging social capital encompasses more distant ties of like persons, such as loose friendships and workmates. Bridging may also refer to those relationships where a single person or a small number of people are members of diverse groups.

Bonding and bridging social capital are not mutually exclusive. Groups from a similar background are not similar in every respect, and may provide bridging links across, for instance, generations or genders or educational achievement. Conversely, in groups from different ethnic backgrounds, people may find others of the same age and sex with a common educational background and interests.

1.6.3 Habitus

Bourdieu refers to the mental and physical dispositions of agents continually developed within particular social fields as the habitus. The habitus is the product of a particular social world and it in turn reproduces and produces the social world in which it is actively engaged:

The dispositions of agents, their habitus, that is, the mental structures through which they apprehend the social world, are essentially the product of the internalisation of the structures of that world. As perceptive dispositions tend to be adjusted to position, agents, even the most disadvantaged ones, tend to perceive the world as natural and to accept it much more readily than one might imagine (Bourdieu, 1989, pp. 18-19).

The mental structures that are built up in each field provide feel for the practices of these fields, a sense of what is natural, a feel of the game or a feel for the game. Through habitus, a world of common sense is created, a world that seems self-evident.

1.7 RESEARCH APPROACH

This research fits within a broad qualitative research paradigm. It is underpinned by the belief that quantitative measuring of social capital does not adequately capture the real world contexts of social capital, or the understanding, relationships or processes among the individuals involved. A number of important social capital characteristics of individuals and communities such as personal subjectivities, perceptions and beliefs cannot be adequately reduced to numbers or adequately understood without reference to the local context in which people live. The choice of methodology was influenced by an understanding of how individuals come to know the social world and by an understanding of the nature of the social world.

Creswell (2005) defines qualitative research as an inquiry process of “understanding a social or human problem, based on building a complex, holistic picture, formed with words, reporting detailed views of informants, and conducted in a natural setting” (p. 15). The essential characteristics of qualitative research are a goal to elicit understanding and meaning, with the researcher as primary instrument of data collection and analysis, and the use of field work, as an inductive orientation to analysis and findings that are richly descriptive (Merriam, 1998, p. 11). The strength of qualitative research derives primarily from its inductive approach, its focus on specific situations or people, and its emphasis on words rather than numbers (Maxwell, 2005, p. 17).

This study incorporates a number of broad identifying features of qualitative research. The inquiry takes place in a natural setting (in this case, the school site) and is interpretive in character. The process adopted is inductive and flexible, with the researcher assuming the role of data collector and analysis instrument throughout the process, and valuing ‘thick description’. This is a qualitative research study, as shown by its approach and through the data gathering and analysis phases.

In addition, it employs elements of a quantitative approach, of frequency counts, calculations and comparison necessary to tally, compare and combine the constructed codes and categories. The constructivist grounded theory coding was not an attempt to “reduce the [participants’] responses to quantitative categories” (Smith, 2006, p. 9), but rather a means by which to organise themes and patterns, to aid the construction of

thematic areas and discourses. Arguably, this conservative use of a mixed-methods approach strengthens the comparative capacity across data, without undermining the strengths brought to the research by the qualitative.

1.8 METHODOLOGY

The methodology or strategy of inquiry (Creswell, 2003; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005) employed in this research is focused on selection from a wide variety of valid types available which would best achieve the research aim and research questions. This research employs the research methodology of case studies (Yin, 2006). A definition that captures the most important features of case study research as an empirical inquiry is that it, “investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (Yin, 2006, p. 13). A case can be one of many things such as an individual, a group, an institution or a community. It can be single or there can be multiple cases.

Case study research methodologies are broadly defined as qualitative research procedures for describing, analysing, and interpreting a culture-sharing group’s shared patterns of behaviour, beliefs, and language that develop over time. A central feature of the definition is the term ‘culture’, which consists of everything having to do with human behaviour and belief such as language, rituals, economic and political structures. To understand the patterns of a culture-sharing group, the case study researcher typically spends considerable time in the field observing, interviewing and gathering documents about the group in order to understand their culture-sharing behaviours, beliefs and language (Creswell, 2005; Stake, 2008; Yin, 2006).

1.9 DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES

There are several ways of collecting data in qualitative research. Theorists in this field (Yin, 1994, 2003; Stake, 1994, 2008) suggest no single data collection technique has an advantage over others. In fact, various techniques for data collection are highly complementary and a strong study will use as many as possible. This research utilised the case study technique of interviews (Burns, 2000; Stake, 2008). The research also used questionnaires to determine overall aggregate levels of specific characteristics of social capital in the family unit and the students participants.

1.9.1 Interviews

Interviews were a major source of data, by providing opportunities for in-depth discussions with the student participants. The data collection technique of interviewing offers the opportunity to access the two main principle uses of case study research, which are obtaining the descriptions and interpretations of others. Stake (2008) believes the use of interviews in case study research is the main road to acquiring the multiple realities of participants. In this research the interviewing styles of focus group interview and one-on-one interviewing (Creswell, 2009, p. 215) were used.

This research employed semi-structured interview schedules for both the focus group interviews and the one-on-one interviews. A direction is provided for the interview so the content of the research topic is covered. Semi-structured interviewing allows greater flexibility than the formal approach while also generating a valid response from the informant's perception of reality. The semi-structured interview schedules were carefully designed to obtain data, which would significantly assist the research.

1.10 DATA ANALYSIS

Within the case study design, this study draws on the analytic technique of constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2000, 2001, 2005, 2006; Charmaz & Mitchell, 2002). It also presents a summary of the data collected through questionnaires with families and students. This is consistent with the description of case study research by Anderson, Timms and Courtney (2007), who state, "data collection and data analysis are concurrent activities" (p. 154). Also consistent with a broad case study approach, the data sources and techniques in this research are broad to allow for the emergence and recognition of issues of interest (Anderson, 2007; Charmaz, 2005, 2006; Charmaz & Mitchell, 2002; Dey, 1999, 2007; Haig, 1995; Whipp, 1998; Yin, 2006).

1.11 THESIS STRUCTURE

This chapter outlines the significance of the study and the research orientation as well as the various contexts within which the research is situated. Chapter 2 examines more fully the literature associated with family, schooling and transition to post-secondary education. It also explores more fully the ideas of Bourdieu, social

capital and cultural capital. Chapter 3 outlines the research approach for perspectives on theory and design for the thesis. Chapter 4 discusses the interpretation of data generated from constructivist grounded theory as well as the questionnaire data.

Chapters 5 and 6 identify people and conditions that influence characteristics of social capital on the learning process of students in the Northwest of Tasmania. Chapter 5 explores student participants' social capital and its impact on their knowledge, beliefs and application towards participation and achievement at school. Chapter 6 explores the role, application and function of cultural capital. Chapter 7 proposes a theory a theory of intervention to help rural students. Chapter 8 contains implications and conclusions.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This study investigated the influence of characteristics of social capital in the family unit on the learning process of students in the Northwest of Tasmania, with regard to student academic aspirations and achievement. Underpinning the research is the proposition that characteristics of social capital in the family influence the adoption of particular social agency traits in a student, which, in turn, influence their engagement with the broad learning process. For the purposes of this thesis, knowledge of post-secondary alternatives and entry requirements, beliefs about the relevance and attainability of a university education, and aspirations for higher education, are components of a young person's embodied cultural capital, or habitus.

This research contends a young person's bonding social capital plays a significant role in shaping, and in many cases, limiting their habitus. This influence operates through the presence or absence of academically successful role models, differential modes of parental support, experience of the world of university, and conversations among family and peers. These factors compound such that young people from rural area backgrounds are likely to acquire incomplete or inaccurate knowledge of higher education, negative beliefs about university, and low expectations they might go to university. Entrenched as it is, this research proposes that changing a students' habitus requires means that are both powerful and sustained.

This chapter comprises three main sections. The first defines types of cultural capital and explores processes by which embodied capital is acquired. The second theorises the roles of bonding and bridging social capital in the construction of young people's habitus with regard to higher education. The final section explores the potential for changing the habitus of young people from rural and regional backgrounds.

2.2 UNDERSTANDING FAMILY, SCHOOLING AND TRANSITION TO POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

As indicated in Chapter 1, parental level of education is considered the strongest predictor of school performance and of post-secondary destinations. To understand differential rates of transition to university and of ways it may be possible to increase

transition rates for disadvantaged groups, it is necessary to understand the roles played by family and schooling in the choices of young people from these kinds of backgrounds.

There are many ways in which to understand the influence of family and schooling on young people's post-secondary choices. It has been variously argued a person's academic success is the natural consequence of her or his inherent abilities and efforts, and it is the result of family characteristics and deficits or, more recently, of structural and cultural inequities within the education system. Approaches to interventions that might improve young people's life chances have therefore ranged from notions that such measures are unnecessary and irrelevant, through those that address deficits in the family, to those, which assert that the entire education system needs to be reconceptualised. This chapter explores one theory in depth, that of social and cultural capital, and mounts an argument for its application to this thesis.

As established in Chapter 1, the meritocratic notion that lower rates of transition are due to lower academic ability among students from lower socio-economic backgrounds has largely been debunked. Several recent studies have demonstrated that, once at university, people from disadvantaged backgrounds have levels of success and completion similar to their counterparts from middle and upper socio-economic backgrounds. (Hillman, 2005; Universities Australia, 2008; Cairnduff, 2009).

During the 1960s and 1970s the meritocratic model lost ground and was replaced with the notion of cultural deprivation. Attention turned to characteristics of individuals' backgrounds, such as material circumstances and the extent to which education is valued in the home. The family environment came to be seen as 'deficit' in terms of access to economic resources, cultural values and motivation (Germov, 2004) and the notion of compensatory education as a means of changing outcomes for disadvantaged children arose (Bernstein, 1971, p. 190).

The failure of compensatory measures to raise participation in higher education among those from low socio-economic backgrounds shows the deficit model to be oversimplistic and not sufficient to explain low transition rates. More recent approaches view educational outcomes as resulting from a complex interplay of factors including family influences, characteristics of schooling, educational structures and individual agency. Among these is social and cultural capital theory.

This research argues social and cultural capital theory provides a useful framework; one that goes beyond the discrete effects usually considered determinants within which to analyse and understand the interaction of young people with their families and their schools in the construction of their habitus with regard to higher education. In addition, it is a reminder that social and cultural capital are available outside the home and therefore a young person's post-secondary destination is not entirely pre-determined by family background (Coleman, 1997), but is open to transformation in certain conditions.

2.3 BOURDIEU'S THEORY OF SOCIAL PRACTICE

Bourdieu (1984) argued that there is a structure that rules social interaction, everyday life and social behaviour, which he expressed in his formula: **(Habitus x Capital) + Field = Practice**. Mahon (2006) explains, "practice results from relations between one's dispositions (habitus) and one's position in a field (capital), within the current state of play of that social arena (field)" (p. 51). In the following sections, each concept is explained in the context of this study to understand the influence of social capital on the learning process of students in the Northwest of Tasmania. The aim is to provide a coherent framework for analysing and interpreting data produced by the study.

2.3.1 Habitus

Bourdieu referred to the mental and physical dispositions of agents as continually developed within particular social fields as the habitus. The habitus is the product of a particular social world and it in turn reproduces and produces the social world in which it is actively engaged. The dispositions of agents, their habitus (that is, the mental structures through which they apprehend the social world) are essentially the product of the internalisation of the structures of that world. As perceptive dispositions tend to be adjusted to position, agents, even the most disadvantaged ones, tend to perceive the world as natural and to accept it much more readily than one might imagine:

The mental structures that we build up in each field that we experience provide us with a feel for the practices of these fields, a sense of what is natural, a feel of the game or a feel for the game. Through habitus, we have

a world of common sense, a world that seems self-evident (Bourdieu, 1989, pp. 18-19).

An individual's habitus is formed by elements of family, friends, education, biology, geography, class, race and gender. In *Distinction* (1984a), Bourdieu proposed people of similar habitus have similar dispositions and are likely to make similar choices in certain situations, especially when it comes to cultural tastes. There have been many critiques of the concept of habitus (for example, Lau, 2004; Lizardo, 2004; Noble & Watkins, 2003; Mutch, 2003).

Notwithstanding these critiques, habitus is considered, for this study, a highly productive way to describe the set of principles that generate and organise practice. These principles are objectively adapted to their outcomes "without presupposing conscious aiming at ends" (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 53) and "enabling agents to cope with unforeseen and ever changing situations" (Bourdieu, 1998a, p. 72). As the result of the internalisation of external structures, habitus reacts to the solicitations of the field in a roughly coherent and systematic manner (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 18). In relation to habitus, Bourdieu used descriptive terms such as 'class unconsciousness', 'cultural unconsciousness', 'habit-forming force', 'set of basic, deeply interiorized master patterns' and 'generative principle of regulated improvisations' (Swartz, 1997, p. 101). Habitus provides the agent with a set of dispositions that form a range of actions of an individual in particular situations.

The habitus is both the generative principle of objectively classifiable judgements and the system of classification of these practices. It is in the relationship between the two capacities, which define the habitus, the capacity,

... to produce classifiable practices and works, and the capacity to differentiate and appreciate these practices and products (taste), that the represented social world, i.e. the space of lifestyles, is constituted (Bourdieu, 1984a, p. 170).

2.3.2 Forms of capital

Forms of capital are central to most, if not all aspects of opportunity, opinion and choice. Capital is an important analytical concept in this thesis for examining the different experiences and expectations of three distinct youth cohorts. Bourdieu defined capital as,

... [a]ccumulated labour (in its materialised form or its 'incorporated', embodied form) which, when appropriated on a private, i.e. exclusive, basis by agents or groups of agents, enables them to appropriate social energy in the form of reified or living labour (Bourdieu, 1986, pp. 241-242).

The distribution of different forms of capital among classes determines “the chances of success for practices” (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 242). When Bourdieu used the word ‘capital’ it is not necessarily in the traditional economic form of money or property (Bennett, Emmison & Frow, 1999, p. 10). Rather, all fields are analogous with the field of economics in the sense that they function in the same way. That is, one requires capital to participate, compete and succeed when one enters a particular field in search of its rewards. Originally, three forms of capital were identified:

Economic capital, which is immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalised in the form of property rights ... cultural capital, which is convertible, on certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalised in the form of educational qualifications; and ... social capital, made up of social obligations (connections), which is convertible, in certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalised in the form of title nobility (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 243).

Economic capital is simply capital as Marx defined it: money, shares and property. Social capital denotes privileged connections, networks and acquaintances that open doors to powerful or prosperous positions. Social capital operates towards both inclusion and exclusion. For example, prominent family networks and prestigious schooling maintain and lubricate social and economic advantage by including the privileged and excluding others. In this sense, there are connotations of nepotism.

In *The State Nobility*, Bourdieu (1996) highlighted myriad examples where advantage is inherited. For example, attendance at specific educational institutions can be traced as giving a considerable head start into the upper echelons of the powerful fields of government, bureaucracy and business (Hartman, 2000). The concept of social capital has been reworked and co-opted (for example, Putnam, 2000; Latham, 1998) to the point where Bourdieu’s original conception is lost (Law & Mooney, 2006; Levitas, 2004; O’Brien and O’Fathaigh, 2005). This reworking engages primarily with inclusion and sees networks as positive forces in society to the point where they seem to reinforce and legitimise the transmission of the very privileges that Bourdieu criticised (Adkins, 2005).

2.3.3 Symbolic Capital/Power and Violence

For Bourdieu, class relations are power relations. As with the link between cultural capital and economic capital, symbolic power is as important for explaining the process of social reproduction as physical or economic power. Central to his project is uncovering the symbolic forms of power inherent in class relations, where political and economic discourses maintain symbolic violence (Crossley, 2005; Topper 2001). Bourdieu's whole project may be read as a hunt for the uncovering of symbolic domination (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, p. 119). In this sense, Bourdieuan sociology is one that is constituted by the uncovering of hidden and subtle forces that are not immediately perceived (Crossley, 2005, p. 319).

Weber's understanding of the state was that it held a monopoly on legitimate violence. In Bourdieu's understanding of the state, while the governed have no trouble in recognising actual state violence, in the population both the dominant and the dominated misrecognise the subtle forms of domination that manifest from political relations, knowledge systems and economic forces as 'normal'. In this sense, the state maintains a monopoly on symbolic violence (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 221). Misrecognition is central to this power (Bourdieu, 1996, p. 30). Symbolic power is dispersed on a number of levels. In a similar manner to Foucault's description of power relations within discourse, Bourdieu highlights how experts "are sanctioned to make judgements and impose definitions/categories so that their words, at least within the domains that they are sanctioned, carry more power than those of others" (Crossley, 2005, p. 317).

Symbolic violence "is the violence which is exercised upon a social agent with his or her complicity" (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, p. 167). Agents recognise (or misrecognise) institutionalised expert knowledge. Symbolic power in operation becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy in that those who are affected by it consent to it. Symbolic violence is "a gentle violence, imperceptible and invisible even to its victims, exerted for the most part through purely symbolic channels of communication and cognition (more precisely misrecognition)" (Bourdieu, 2001, p. 2). In terms of language for instance, the use of specialised jargon in a field may exclude people who are unfamiliar with it. A lack of cultural capital may see an individual feel excluded or

belittled if they visit an art gallery and do not understand notions of 'surrealism' or 'postmodernism'. This exclusion is a form of symbolic violence.

Bourdieu and Eagleton (1992) argued that language is not just a form of communication but also a medium of power, especially in the field of politics where words are in fact actions. Put simply, "what matters in talk, in discourse, is not some power inherent in power itself, but the kind of authority or legitimacy with which it is backed" (Bourdieu & Eagleton, 1992, p. 112). For instance, derogatory terms used in Australia such as 'single mums', 'boat people', 'queue jumpers' and 'dole bludgers' are done so to secure specific political interventions that shore up the interests of voting constituencies. Symbolic power is exercised by those with the ability to produce these representations, while those labelled often feel the effects of symbolic violence in the form of marginalisation, stigma and lack of status. Symbolic violence may also be experienced as a lack of access to resources, being treated as inferior, or being limited in terms of realistic aspirations (Webb, Schirato & Danaher, 2002, p. xvi), or what Adams refers to as the possibility of a "post-reflexive choice" (2006, 514).

Bourdieu went to great lengths to show how social class positions were reproduced from one generation to the next. For Bourdieu, the powerful fields of politics, economics, business and education are much more likely to reproduce "existing social inequalities rather than challenging and transforming the status quo" (Webb, Schirato & Danaher, 2002, p. xv) as the individuals that take up decision making positions in these fields are obviously likely to benefit from a continuation of their dominance. But this is not just a deliberate act on the part of the dominant, the forgotten struggles that produce *doxa* and place the cultural arbitrary in hierarchies, see culture itself impel inequality through largely misrecognised symbolic means.

The specifically symbolic logic of distinction additionally secures material and symbolic profits for the possessors of a large cultural capital any given cultural competence derives a scarcity value from its distribution of cultural capital and yields profits of distinction for its owner. In other words, the share in profits which scarce cultural capital secures in class-divided societies is based, in the last analysis, on the fact that all agents do not have the economic and cultural means for prolonging their

children's education beyond the minimum necessary for the reproduction of the labour-power least valorised at a given moment (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 245).

In short, the dominated suffer the double bind of lacking both the economic means to compete and the cultural proficiencies to be upwardly mobile. This becomes an economy of scale; some individuals do manage to break the binds and improve their socio-economic situation and status, but most do not. Nevertheless, social change does happen and this is explained in Bourdieu's construction of social fields. The field is a dynamic structure. Accordingly the change of position of any agent or knowledge set within the field changes the structure of the field as a whole. For some of the young working class people studied in this thesis project, they represent the first member of their extended family to pursue post-compulsory education. So their presence in a senior secondary classroom minutely changes the field. It signifies both individual upward social mobility, and is at the same time an expression of structural changes to the Australian labour market which have seen many more young people completing 12 years of schooling.

2.3.4 Field

The students of Caritas Catholic College have a number of species of capital and competencies. According to Bourdieu, power and influence within a group is dependent on the acquiring of capital that is recognised by that group. Bourdieu referred to the setting for trading and negotiating of the worth of an individual's assets, the market or the game, as a field, such that the

... value of the species of capital (e.g. knowledge of Greek or of integral calculus) hinges on the existence of a game, of a field in which this competency can be employed: a species of capital is what is efficacious in the given field, both as a weapon and as a stake of struggle, that which allows its possessors to wield power and influence, and thus to exist, in the field under consideration, instead of being considered a negligible quantity ... the notions of capital and field are tightly interconnected (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 98).

The social settings in which the students of Caritas Catholic College engage in their identity play constitute Bourdieuan social fields. The capital that is recognised by a particular group may be used as a tool in the quest for higher status. These fields are characterised as places of struggle and negotiation:

A field is a structured social space, a field of forces, a force field. It contains people who dominate and others who are dominated. Constant, permanent relationships of inequality operate inside the space, which at the same time becomes a space in which the various actors struggle for the transformation or preservation of the field. All individuals in this universe bring to the competition all the (relative) power at their disposal. It is this power that defines their position in the field and, as a result, their strategies (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 218).

According to Bourdieu, social laws govern these fields. He claimed that by providing better knowledge of the laws of the social world, the social sciences give more freedom to the world. The social laws to which Bourdieu referred are not universal laws in the sense of the physical sciences. They are contingent and context dependent:

A social law is a historical law that perpetuates itself only as long as we let it operate, that is, as long as those whom it serves are in a position to perpetuate the conditions of its efficacy ... In reality, science must know that it does nothing more than record, in the form of tendential laws, the logic which characterises a certain game, at a certain moment in time, and which functions in favour of those who dominate the game and have the means to set the rules of the game in fact and in law. As soon as the law is stated, it can become the stake of struggles ... the uncovering of tendential laws is the condition of successive actions aimed at proving them wrong (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 197).

The practices and strategies within each field are the product of both the capital holdings of the players and also their historically determined qualities. Bourdieu identified the unearthing of the laws that govern these fields of social practice as the critical step in opening up these practices to the possibility of change. He challenged the sociologist to expose these taken-for-granted processes to scrutiny so that there may be space for them to be challenged and potentially subverted, transgressed or transformed. The field is neither a fixed entity nor a rigidly deterministic setting. It is a structure that provides a mechanism for agency and flexibility. The field is the locus of relations of force and not only of meaning and of struggles aimed at transforming it, and therefore of endless change (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 103).

Bourdieu's emphasis on the field as a site of struggle and potential transformation also incorporates a sense of the role of the temporal in social practices. He included the history of a field and the habitual ways of doing things of a group or individual in his explanation of the nature of a field of practice. The field and the active

agent have both been formed by previous experiences and the current experience will either reinforce or alter this structure.

The structure of the field is a state of the power relations among the agents or institutions engaged in the struggle, that is, a state of the distribution of the specific capital which has been accumulated in the course of previous struggles and which oriented subsequent strategies. The structure, which governs the strategies aimed at transforming it, is itself always at stake. The struggles that take place within the field are about the monopoly of the legitimate violence (specific authority), which is characteristic of the “field in question, which means, ultimately, the conservation or subversion of the structure of the distribution of the specific capital” (Bourdieu, 1993b, p. 73).

The emphasis on the state of struggle within fields and its power to transform a field is tempered by the observation that:

Those who take part in the struggle help to reproduce the game by helping ... to produce belief in the value of the stakes. The new players have to pay an entry fee which consists in recognition of the value of the game (selection and co-option always pay greater attention to the indices of commitment to the game, investment in it) and in (practical) knowledge of the principles of the functioning of the game ... the partial revolutions which constantly occur in fields do not call into question the very foundations of the game, its fundamental axioms, the bedrock of ultimate beliefs on which the whole game is based, on the contrary, the fields of production of cultural goods — religion, literature or art — heretical subversion claims to be returning to the sources, the origin, the spirit, the authentic essence of the game, in opposition to the finalisation and degradation which it has suffered ... like the ordeals in rites of passage, this investment helps to make the pure and simple destruction of the game unthinkable in practical terms (Bourdieu, 1993b, p. 74).

The tensions within fields discussed here contribute to the development of opportunities for social change, but the tension within a single field may not be sufficient of itself to achieve transformation. The tensions between fields provide greater momentum for change to occur. This study explores the relationship between various fields of practice in the site of Caritas Catholic College. Bourdieu’s idea of the habitus provides a mechanism for the initiation of innovation or resistance. The habitus of the young people of Caritas Catholic College is an important focus of this study.

2.3.5 The forms of capital utilised in the research

The following section describes these notions of cultural, social capital and associated impacts on an individual's habitus. Cultural capital is expressed through three forms; namely institutionalised, objectified and embodied. It is embodied cultural capital, which is of particular relevance to this study. Social capital takes the two forms of bonding and bridging, and this section explores the influence of each type on young people's cultural capital.

2.4 CULTURAL CAPITAL

The concept of cultural capital originates in the work of Bourdieu and Passeron (1977). They defined cultural capital as "the cultural goods transmitted by the family pedagogic actions" (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977, p. 30). These cultural differences include language and other symbolic aspects such as knowledge of high art, possession of credentials, and dispositions. Just as economic capital is distributed unequally in society, so is cultural capital; the upper classes possess more of the 'right' kind of cultural capital, which raises academic achievement and facilitates transition into further education.

Bourdieu and Passeron recognised "school contributes to cultural reproduction, and through it, to social reproduction, by enabling the possessors of the prerequisite cultural capital to continue to monopolise that capital" (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977, p. 47). They argued schools reward initial advantages in cultural capital, linked to a person's social class. The result is that those who already possess, by virtue of their family background, some of the cultural capital that is valued by schools, are most often those who are successful. Cultural capital is progressively translated into school capital in the form of good marks (Teese, 1997, p. 94), which in turn provides access to the most sought-after higher education institutions and degrees. While economic factors connected with family and social class have an impact on a person's educational outcomes, it is cultural factors that Bourdieu and Passeron viewed as the "most determinant educational investment" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 244).

Bourdieu distinguished between three forms of cultural capital. First, it can be present in the objectified state, which comprises possession of material cultural goods such as pictures, books and instruments. Objectified cultural capital is transmissible as

economic capital; it is not the economic value that has the greatest impact, but the usage of such possessions. Second, it can exist in the institutionalised state, in the form of academic qualifications. Institutionalised cultural capital can be converted to economic capital by providing access to the more prestigious professions. Finally, cultural capital can exist in the embodied state, defined as long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body.

2.4.1 Embodied cultural capital

A crucial aspect of an individual's cultural capital, developed in the family, is that of a collection of durable dispositions which become embodied — an integral part of the person — in what Bourdieu referred to as embodied cultural capital, or habitus. Embodied cultural capital, or habitus, by definition, “cannot be transmitted instantaneously” (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 245). The acquisition of habitus — self-improvement — requires an investment of time, effort and, directly or indirectly, economic capital. The accumulation of cultural capital starts early in a person's life and works most efficiently for the offspring of families endowed with the sort of cultural capital that is valued by schools. Through the primary pedagogic work of the family, basic predispositions, such as towards learning, are established in a child.

This study focuses on those elements of embodied cultural capital that are relevant to participate and achieve at school knowledge and beliefs about, and predisposition towards current and future educational goals. This includes knowledge such as subject material, expectations, ability to manage time and post-secondary choices. The possession of these insights constitutes the ‘right’ kind of cultural capital that facilitates the development of aspirations for post-secondary education.

The strength of parental levels of education as a predictor of young people's post-secondary destinations has led many to surmise that family attitudes are the key. This notion remains largely un-theorised, and assumptions that certain social classes hold negative attitudes should be treated with caution. Connell, White and Johnson (1991), for example, found most working class parents valued education highly, and that they often “strongly desire to see their children receive more education than they received themselves” (1982, p. 11). Coleman (1988a) also noted families with low levels of education lack not a regard for education, but the means to make such regard work

effectively for them. For example, working class parents may feel less equipped to diagnose their child's progress, to liaise effectively with education professionals, or to provide specific educational support.

Similarly, Collins and Thompson (1997) found distinctions other than attitudinal differences in the cultural capital held by lower class families. They observed upper- and middle-class families tended to have more cultural capital in the form of level of education and status. Higher levels of education helped parents to better understand school cultures and expectations, while higher status brought with it the confidence to interact with schools to get what they wanted for their children (Collins & Thompson, 1997, p. 260).

For these reasons, it is more useful in this research to cast differential family characteristics not as 'attitudinal', but as differences in cultural capital. It is therefore necessary to examine other entrenched perceptions and predispositions, such as knowledge, beliefs and aspirations, which might impact on participation and achievement at school.

2.4.2 Embodied cultural capital: knowledge and beliefs

Bourdieu suggested a young person's habitus predominantly reflects the habitus of those in their close social worlds. Bourdieu observed the dispositions, which make up this habitus, are the products of "opportunities and constraints framing the individual's earlier life experiences" (Reay, 2004, p. 433). As a result, he argued, "the most improbable practices are rejected as unthinkable, but, concomitantly, only a limited range of practices are possible" (Reay, 2004, p. 433). In the case of participation and achievement at school, a young person's knowledge, beliefs and aspirations will reflect to a large extent the educational experiences of their parents and close family members. As the majority of students in this study come from homes where one or both parents completed post-secondary education, they are likely to have had a number of opportunities to build their knowledge of short- and long-term economic, social and cultural benefits of successfully achieving at school.

2.4.3 Embodied cultural capital: self-efficacy and aspirations

This study is fundamentally sociological in nature; however, in examining young people's beliefs and dispositions, it touches on the concepts of self-efficacy and identity constructs that are generally treated in the field of psychology. There is an enormous body of research literature in both self-efficacy and identity; it is not possible to do justice to that literature in this thesis.

For the purposes of this study, self-efficacy refers to participants' beliefs in their ability to perform in academic subjects, in terms of how they rated their chances of achieving necessary marks to gain entry to the post-secondary course of their choice. These beliefs in one's abilities — self-efficacy beliefs — may be a critical element in shaping a young person's aspirations. Self-efficacy has been linked with the intensity of effort expended toward attaining a goal (Bandura, 1997). More recently, it has emerged as a highly effective predictor of students' motivation and learning, and been shown to mediate students' academic achievement (Zimmerman, 2000, p. 82).

Levels of perceived self-efficacy have also been shown to correlate with the range of career options seriously considered (Bandura, 1997, p. 136). The high aspirations which stem from strong self-efficacy beliefs can drive young people to work hard, which is likely to raise their academic achievement and may ultimately facilitate their post-secondary choices. Conversely, weak self-efficacy beliefs are likely to lower their aspirations and effort as, "if people believe they have no power to produce results, they will not attempt to make things happen" (Bandura, 1997, p. 3). This would have consequences for their academic achievement, and would ultimately restrict the post-secondary options considered attainable.

Expectations of self-efficacy are believed to be derived from four principal sources of information: performance accomplishments, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion and physiological states (Bandura, 1977, 1997). Physiological states aside, the majority of the student participants in this study are likely to have access to the three other sources of information regarding the factors which help successful participation and achievement at school. That is to say, they are likely to have opportunities to experience accomplishment of successfully finishing Year 12, and frequent opportunities for the vicarious experience of post-secondary educational

attainment. Further, as the majority of their parents went on to further education such as university themselves, they may receive verbal persuasion that this is a viable option for them in the future. The majority of student participants are likely to have developed a moderate to strong sense of self-efficacy beliefs in their ability to successfully achieve at school and gain entry into the post-secondary training or education of their choice.

This builds a picture of a group of student participants whose embodied cultural capital is likely to be characterised by a strong understanding and knowledge of what is required of them to achieve in the broad academic school environment. The disposition towards having belief that academic success and future educational attainment is for people like themselves and consequently, the vast majority of the student participants aspire for these goals. The following explores the ways in which embodied cultural capital is constructed and transferred *via* social capital in the shaping of the student participant's habitus.

2.5 SOCIAL CAPITAL

The term 'social capital' was applied, separately, to education in the 1980s by Coleman (1988a, 1988c, 1988c, 1997) and Bourdieu (1986, 1988a). It refers to a variety of social resources linked to possession of a network of relationships or membership in groups, which provide individuals with access to collectively owned capital which may be useable, such as being converted into economic capital, in the short or long term (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 243). It is not so much a resource in itself, but rather a, "panoply of mechanisms that connect individuals to resources" (Fernandez-Kelly, 2002, p. 76).

The core idea of social capital theory is that social networks have value that can affect the economic and status standing of individuals (Bourdieu, 1986) and groups (Putnam, 2000). It should be noted that, while both Bourdieu and Putnam explored the notion of social capital, the two operated from different reference points. While this research draws mainly on the seminal work of Bourdieu in constructing the framework of social capital and its impact on cultural capital, considerable reference is made to Putnam's work, particularly his contribution of the notions of bonding and bridging social capital. This is achieved through direct reference to Putnam's work and to the ABS social capital framework (ABS, 2004).

Just as economic capital and cultural capital are distributed unequally, so is social capital. The upper classes enjoy a 'situational advantage' from their access to networks with others sharing privilege (Fernandez-Kelly, 2002, p. 74). Thus, they have more opportunity to accumulate and cash in on the type of social capital needed to preserve their social status. In his comprehensive study of collective social capital Putnam (2000) observed that, while race, poverty and adult educational levels had an effect, social capital was the single most important explanatory factor in explaining differential scores in standardised tests. Thus social capital exerts a 'multiplier effect' on the economic and cultural capital an individual already possesses (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 249).

2.5.1 Bonding, bridging and linking forms of social capital

Since the early 1990s literature has focused less on producing and refining definitions and more on efforts to understand the different dimensions of social capital. Recognition of the different dimensions of social capital can help to reconcile some of the differing conceptualisations of social capital that abound, providing a link between "... the micro-level individual activities that create social capital and the macro-level effects of those attitudes and behaviours that then characterise communities, neighbours and states" (Macinko & Starfield, 2001, p. 399). Figure 2.1 demonstrates the dichotomised notions of bonding and bridging social capital and reconciles these with horizontal and vertical capital, which are also part of social capital. (Harpham, Grant & Thomas, 2002, p. 54)

The bridging or vertical dimensions of social capital avert tendencies towards interference that align the concept with nostalgic longing. To try to foster social capital in a vacuum devoid of policy and infrastructure initiatives may only address symptoms. Hence a community may be rich in social capital in the sense of networks and connections, but poor in assets and resources that enable people to escape from the poverty in which they reside (Harriss & De Renzio, 1997). Social capital in part eludes a consensual definition because of the variable ways in which it manifests in different contexts, cultures and settings. Although these contexts are nested within each other, social capital may assume different forms in family, workplace and community settings (Harriss & De Renzio, 1997).

Halpern (2005) conceived social capital in a multi-level matrix that moves between macro-, meso- and micro- multi-systemic levels. As identified in Table 2.1, Halpern suggests a complex and unifying model of social capital with three dimensions: components (networks, norms, and sanctions), levels of analysis (individual, community, nation) and character (bonding, bridging, linking). This understanding of social capital differs from that of Putnam, Bourdieu and Coleman respectively by going as far as saying that the concept of social capital is synonymous with ‘social fabric’.

Figure 2.1: Bonding and Bridging Social Capital

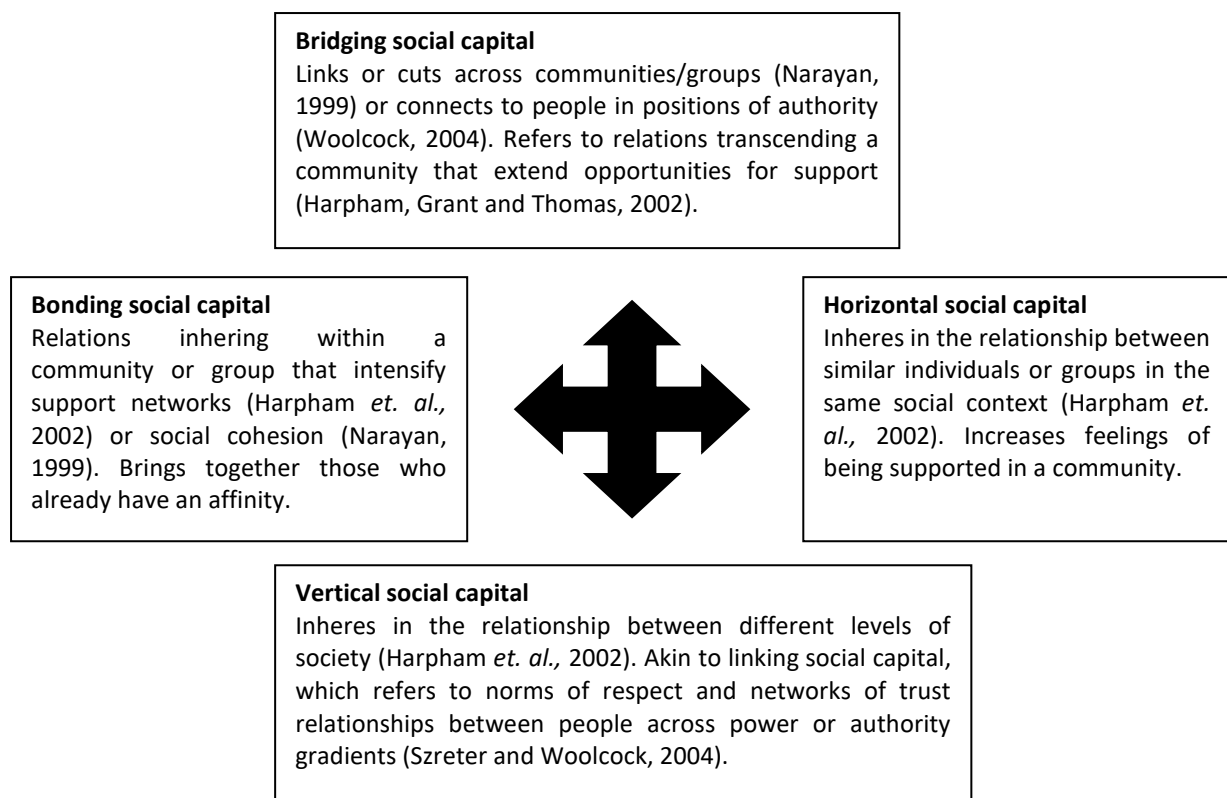


Table 2.1 Social Capital in a Multi-level Matrix

	Bonding	Bridging	Linking	
Macro-level	Honours and laws	Diplomacy, war	International law	Sanctions
	Patriotism and trust	Treaties	Human rights, aid	Norms
	Nation or race	Trading links etc.	United Nations etc.	Networks
Meso-level	Exclusion	Group conflict	Enforcement	Sanctions
	Community customs	Out-group understanding	Mutual respect	Norms
	Neighbourhood or workplace	Links between communities	Links between strata	Networks
Micro-level	Withdrawal of affection	Shame and reputation	Shaming and formal sanctions	Sanctions
	Love and care	Reciprocity	Generosity	Norms
	Parents and siblings	Acquaintances	Links to power	Networks

(Halpern, 2005, p. 16)

2.5.2 Strong and weak ties

Granovetter (1973) distinguished between strong and weak social ties, and observed different styles of interaction provide differential access to resources. Strong ties, generally formed by kinship or friendship, create a sense of belonging, security, and identity. Weak ties, formed through irregular contact with persons outside one's immediate social sphere — often more powerful persons — allow individuals to access resources that may be instrumental in improving one's social station. When relevant connections are not present among a young person's strong ties, weak ties might provide the connections that can make a difference in their lives.

Applying this idea to collective contexts, Putnam (2000) made use of the terms 'bonding' and 'bridging' social capital, from Gittell and Avis' distinction (1998). Bonding social capital is found in networks formed from "perceived shared identity relations" (Putnam, 2000, p. 23) where individuals form connections with others like themselves. These networks are, by definition, inward looking and exclusive. Bridging social capital, however, refers to associations where participants are drawn from a wide range of backgrounds. It is therefore outward looking and more inclusive (Putnam, 2000).

Bourdieu pointed out the social capital of the poor is primarily of the bonding type. This bonding social capital provides essential solidarity and emotional support, but is of limited use in assisting people to move into worlds outside their immediate social

sphere. Rather, it serves to lock them into it as they associate predominantly with others in the same position as themselves, thereby reinforcing a narrow set of possible identities. Bridging social capital, on the other hand, exposes people to others in different positions to themselves. Thus, it can generate relationships with persons or institutions that can give them access to broader identities and to resources and other forms of capital that are lacking in their own environment (Putnam, 2000, p. 23).

While bonding and bridging social capital are discrete in nature, they are not mutually exclusive. People of a comparable social class are not alike in all aspects; this has the potential for bridging links across intergenerational groups, genders and educational attainment. Equally, people from divergent ethnic backgrounds may locate others of a similar age and gender along with comparable educational accomplishments.

The weaker ties in these networks of casual interactions may also support linking social capital that is a sub-type of bridging social capital (Szreter & Woolcock, 2004), which inheres in, “networks that connect actors of different degrees of institutional power” (Helliwell & Putnam, 2004, p. 669). Some of the ties in this category, such as those between strangers or near-strangers, might be so weak as to be negligible. Being neither weak nor strong, such ties would not be expected to be a source of social capital. Putnam and Goss (2002) appeared to allow the possibility that such ties could possess social capital of some sort. In making a distinction between ‘thick’ and ‘thin’ social capital, Putnam and Goss (2002) contrasted them in the following way:

There are also very thin, almost invisible filaments of social capital, such as the nodding acquaintance you have with the person you occasionally see waiting in line at the supermarket, or even a chance encounter with another person in an elevator. Even these very casual forms of social connection have been shown experimentally to induce a certain form of reciprocity; merely nodding to a stranger increases the likelihood that he or she will come to your aid if you are suddenly stricken (Putnam & Goss, 2002, p. 10).

The following discussion on the types of social capital characteristics, which exist in the families of student participants attending Caritas Catholic College on the Northwest coast of Tasmania, focuses heavily upon the ideas of bonding and bridging social capital. The work of Bourdieu (1986, 1990) and Putnam (1998, 2000, 2002) influenced the development of the Australian Bureau of Statistics *Social Capital*

Framework, which was intended to provide “a way of organising and relating different approaches” to social capital (ABS, 2004, p. vii). The framework describes structural properties of social networks, as well as aspects of their functioning, which account for features of social capital:

Social capital resources are presented as attributes of networks, organised as network qualities, structure, transactions and broad types (bonding, bridging and linking). Potential network participants (such as families, friends, organisations/groups) are indicated by network composition (ABS, 2004, p. 5).

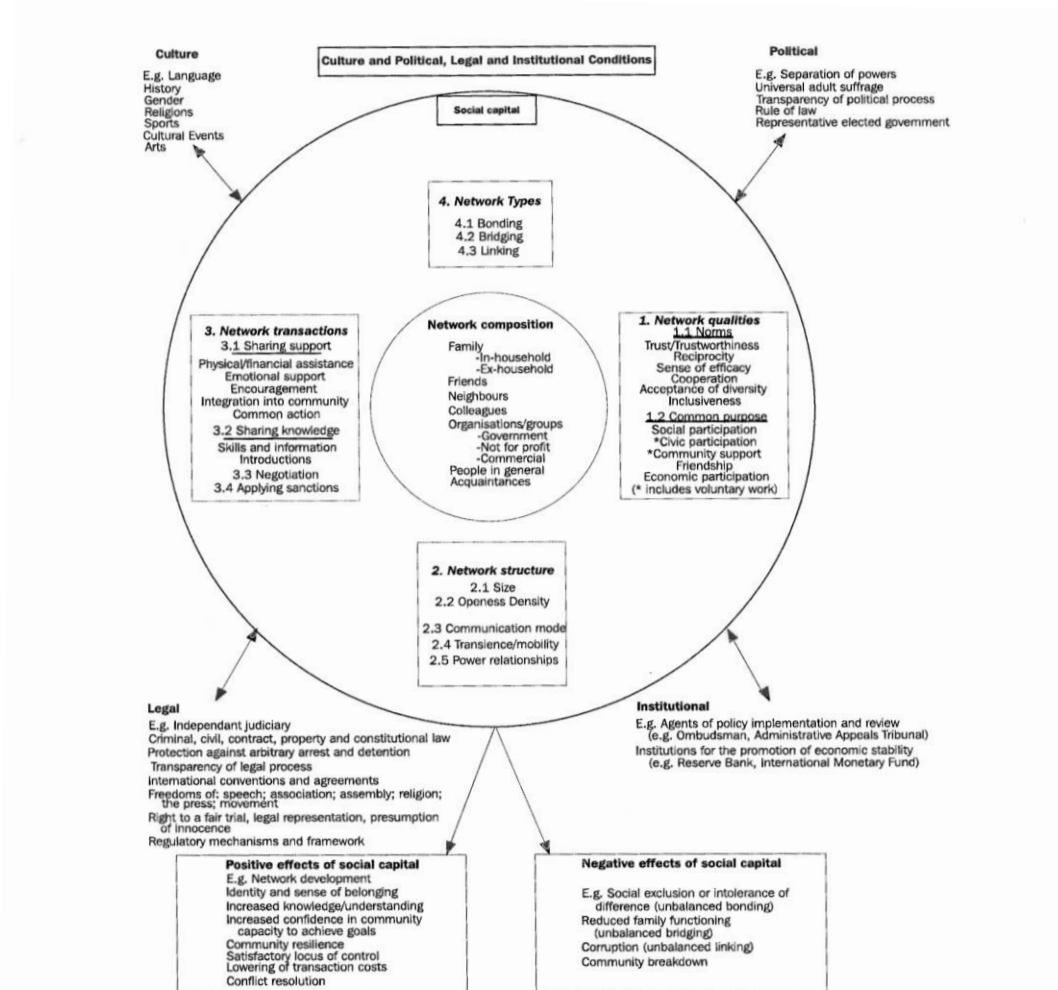
2.5.3 Social networks and social capital

The components of the network, including bonding, bridging and linking social capital are more fully presented in Figure 2.2 Resources and Outcomes Composition of networks is located at the centre of the diagram as this describes the units between which networks exist. A network has a particular “composition” and may consist of family, friends, neighbours, colleagues, organisations and groups, “people in general” or acquaintances (ABS, 2004, p. 19). Organisations and groups include government, non-government and commercial groups.

2.5.4 Informal networks of family and friends

Informal networks of family and friends are connections that are constituted through strong ties (Lin, Cook & Burt, 2001; Field, Schuller & Baron, 2000). Strong ties are delineated by the frequency of interaction and attachment. They generate powerful in-group loyalty (Field, 2008, p. 14). The ties are normally among network members who are “like one another in important respects such as ethnicity, age, gender, social class, and so on” (Franke, 2005, p. 332) so that networks, which are homogeneous, underpin bonding social capital (Franke, 2005).

Figure 2.2 Resources and Outcomes



(ABS, 2004, p. 19).

2.5.5 Casual relationships and interactions

Another network component is the relationship characterised by casual interaction, such as the relationship between acquaintances or “generalised relationships” (Stone & Hughes, 2002, p. 4). These connections are generally weak ties, and may “cross social divides based on religion, class, ethnicity, gender, and socio-economic status” (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000, p. 230); in this way, networks incorporating weak ties are generally composed of more heterogeneous individuals than in groups with strong ties.

These networks support bridging social capital that originates within “social networks that bring together people who are unlike one another” (Putnam & Goss, 2002, p. 11). A divergence of network members supports bridging social capital (Stone & Hughes, 2002). Ties characterised by bridging “are outward looking and encompass people across diverse social groups” (Putnam, 2000, pp. 22-23). While bonding and bridging social capital are discrete in nature, they are not mutually exclusive. People of a comparable social class are not alike in all aspects; this has the potential for bridging links across intergenerational groups, sexes and educational attainment. Equally, people from divergent ethnic backgrounds may locate others of a similar age and gender along with comparable educational accomplishments.

Network qualities comprise social norms like trust, reciprocity, and common purpose such as social, civic and economic participation. Norms and values are vital for a robust performance of networks as they provide confidence for individuals to act cooperatively, and effectively provide rules and sanctions to govern people’s behaviour (ABS, 2004, p. 19). In a specific way norms such as trust and reciprocity are vital due to the fact they help lessen transaction outlay involving compromise and management. They also encourage the sharing of knowledge and ideas within the broad community social structure (ABS, 2004, p. 19).

Network transactions are types of interactions that happen among people in networks and involving organisations. The transactions can be in the shape of shared information, introductions, physical or financial assistance (ABS, 2004, p. 23). These events add to the configuration and preservation of social capital, and they symbolise the reward and duties that network members and groups derive from social capital. The network transaction indicator of “sense of belonging to physical territory” (ABS, 2004, p. 24) such as the Northwest Coast could potentially see students engaging with the learning process in a negative or positive way due to a particular type of relationship with the physical area.

2.6 OUTCOMES: GETTING BY AND GETTING AHEAD

Social capital is of little interest if it does not have beneficial outcomes for network participants. From a resource perspective, social capital outcomes result from network participants' use of social capital resources available in a network. Outcomes

may be at the macro-, meso- or micro-level (Halpern, 2005). A wide range of outcomes of “varying social capital scale” (Stone & Hughes, 2002, p. 1) has been discussed in the social capital literature. At the micro-level, outcomes include poverty reduction and sustainable development (The World Bank, 2008). At the meso-level, outcomes include “increased capacity of the community to achieve goals” (ABS, 2004, p. 19), increased social cohesion (Narayan, 1999) and reduced health inequalities (Osborne, Ziersch & Baum, 2008). This discussion will now focus on social capital outcomes at the micro-level, which is focused on outcomes for individuals.

This discussion of social capital outcomes uses the distinction between ‘getting by’ and ‘getting ahead’ as an organising principle, as it is effective for relating outcomes to types of social capital. ‘Getting by’ and ‘getting ahead’ have been popularised as outcomes of social capital by Putnam (2000, p. 23), who adopted the distinction from de Souza Briggs (1998). The distinction is explained in this way:

Individuals of all backgrounds need a two-sided treasure chest of social capital: access to social support that helps us cope with life's stresses and challenges ('get by') and access to social leverage, the key to mobility or 'getting ahead' (de Souza Briggs, 1998, p. 206).

2.6.1 Bonding social capital and getting by

Getting by is an outcome of bonding social capital (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000; Stone & Hughes, 2002). Social and psychological support is needed for getting by, and bonding social capital is best suited to this purpose (Keating, Swindle & Foster, 2005). Physical and mental health is also needed for getting by, which are promoted by bonding social capital (Poortinga, 2006a; Osborne, Ziersch & Baum, 2008). Bonding social capital is of fundamental importance, yet a negative side has been noted (Putzel, 1997; Cox & Caldwell, 2000; Coffé & Geys, 2007).

Social capital theorists have drawn attention to the negative outcomes of bonding social capital, arguing that homogenous networks underpinning the bonding social capital in some groups has the potential to “... reinforce pre-existing social stratification, prevent mobility of excluded groups, minorities or poor people, and become the bases of corruption and co-option of power by the dominant social groups” (Narayan, 1999, p. 13).

The effect of this concern about the 'dark side' of bonding social capital is that bridging social capital is viewed in a more positive light:

The external effects of bridging networks are likely to be positive, while bonding networks (limited within particular social niches) are at greater risk of producing negative externalities. This is not to say that bonding groups are necessarily bad; indeed, evidence suggests that most of us get our social support from bonding rather than bridging social ties (Putnam & Goss, 2002, p. 11).

2.6.2 Bridging social capital and getting ahead

The value of bridging social capital is seen to lie in its contribution to getting ahead. External (bridging) ties create overlapping networks which “may make accessible the resources and opportunities which exist in one network to a member of another” (Stone & Hughes, 2002, p. 4), thus enabling participants to “leverage their contacts' resources” (Adler & Kwon, 2002, p. 24). Bridging social capital is generally seen as being a feature of heterogeneous social networks (Narayan & Cassidy, 2001). These ties have been found to help network participants to get ahead in a number of ways; the cross-group ties in heterogeneous networks facilitate the flow of information (Teorell, 2003), providing access to broader sources of information (Adler & Kwon, 2002), hence improving resource access (Lin, 2000). Academic achievement has been found to improve in networks with high bridging social capital (Narayan, 1999), as has academic achievement.

In the context of this thesis, parents of student participants, siblings and school friends are construed as components of their bonding social capital, while academically successful role models, such as teachers from outside their immediate social sphere, are construed as bridging social capital. The first proposition is that a young person's bonding social capital limits their habitus, which requires intervention from outside their immediate social sphere to be altered.

The second proposition is that academically successful role models such as teachers can act as the bridging social capital needed to help young people to expand their horizons. This bridging social capital allows them to access resources such as information, identities and motivation, which may be instrumental in facilitating

successful participation and achievement at school. The following section theorises the means by which social capital shapes and transforms young people's habitus.

2.7 ROLE OF BONDING SOCIAL CAPITAL IN DEVELOPING HABITUS

This thesis argues that, while individual characteristics and education structures play a role, it is primarily through the influence of the immediate social world that critical knowledge, beliefs and aspirations are established in young people. This operates in several ways. First, the presence or absence of academically successful role models affects their self-efficacy and identity. Second, conversations among family and peers, coupled with differential modes of parental support, shape their understandings of what is required to be successful at school.

Finally, opportunities to observe the economic and social benefits of post Year 12 education shape their beliefs about it being appropriate for them. In combination, these factors potentially determine the extent to which young people are motivated to achieve at school and view post-secondary options as a realistic option for themselves. In terms of deeply investigating the role of the 'immediate social world' of the students, it is the researcher's belief that to undertake any further 'thicker' description would cause the thesis to move into more abstract themes.

2.7.1 Bonding social capital and self-efficacy

A young person's bonding social capital can impact on the development of their embodied cultural capital with respect to their dispositions toward participation and achievement at school through shaping their self-efficacy beliefs. This can operate through parental goal-setting which, along with students' self-efficacy and personal goals, have been observed to act as predictors of their final course grades (Zimmerman & Schunk, 2011).

Another way in which self-efficacy beliefs are informed is through vicarious experience. Observing another person modelling a competency can be a powerful tool for building a young person's self-efficacy beliefs; however, the people a young person encounters regularly within her/his close social world influences the types of competencies that will be repeatedly observed. Similarity to the person modelling a competency has been demonstrated to increase the relevance of the performance to

the young person's beliefs of his or her own efficacy (Bandura, 1997, pp. 92-93). Thus, observing people perceived as like them successfully completing school is likely to promote the development of positive beliefs in their own ability to participate and achieve at school.

Conversely, the absence of like role models in the lives of some participants in this study means they have had few opportunities for this important form of vicarious experience and are thus less likely to develop positive beliefs in their academic abilities.

2.7.2 Bonding social capital and identity

A young person's bonding social capital can impact upon their embodied cultural capital in the construction of their sense of identity. The notion of agency is used here to describe the extent to which participants were able to construct their possible future selves as successful senior secondary school students, working in professions of their choice. Young people construct their possible future selves from both personal experience and from "the vast array of actual and symbolic models, and socio-cultural influences" they encounter (Bandura, 1997, p. 25). When constructing their possible future selves, young people look first to those people they encounter regularly within their close social worlds. These possible selves "influence the way [they] think about their potential and options ... guide [their] courses of action, motivate [their] pursuit of selected goals" (Bandura, 1997, p. 25). Thus, when young people make study and career decisions, it is proposed that having academically successful role models within their immediate social sphere, particularly people viewed as similar to the young person, would be a useful resource. Conversely, the absence of such resources would likely limit the range of possible selves to those models they encounter in their daily lives.

This thesis proposes that the more students encounter people who have either successfully completed Year 12 or who have successfully completed post Year 12 education, within their immediate social sphere, the more likely they will be motivated to believe they can academically participate and achieve at school. Cote (1996) construed this phenomenon as yet another form of capital, 'identity capital'. Cote (1996) defined identity capital as that in which individuals "invest in who they are" (p. 196). He suggests that, much as with other forms of capital, coming from higher social class backgrounds may give an advantage in acquiring identity capital.

As the majority of the participants in this study came from homes where parents and older siblings have high levels of education, they would have had access to the right sort of identity capital in academically successful role models in their immediate social spheres. Hence, it is suggested it would not be difficult for them to envisage themselves as successfully finishing Year 12 and then moving onto further educational opportunities. Making the transition from school to another educational opportunity or potential career opportunities is not a significant hurdle for a majority of the student participants.

2.7.3 Bonding social capital and conversations

A young person's bonding social capital may also shape their embodied cultural capital through the everyday occurrence of conversations. Young people growing up in homes with high levels of parental and sibling education are more likely to be exposed to conversations about what is required to achieve in specific academic subjects and future educational options. Alternatively, they may feature the parents' or peers' experiences to build a picture of what successful completion of school and going onto further educational opportunities requires, thus helping to demystify the process. These conversations would likely help young people to make informed choices, to form positive beliefs about achievement at school and to view further educational opportunities as relevant and attainable.

As most of the students in this study grew up in homes where completion of Year 12 and going on to further education such as TAFE (Tertiary and Further Education) or university was the norm, it is likely they were often exposed to such conversations. Thus, they are likely to have had significant exposure to accurate anecdotal information about what it takes to successfully participate and achieve at school. The prevalence of such conversations would also mean they had opportunities to learn vicariously about the experience of successfully completing Year 12 from someone perceived to be like them. It is proposed this would likely lead to the acquisition of strong, positive images of successfully completing school. Ultimately, the presence of these images should lead them to develop a notion that actively involving themselves in the academic side of school is of considerable significance to them in the short to long term.

2.7.4 Bonding social capital and experience

A third means by which a young person's bonding social capital can encourage the establishment of positive habitus is through providing a view into the world of university and/or the world of professional occupations. Young people with university students and/or professionals in their close social world are more likely to have opportunities to visit a campus or professional workplace. This thesis suggests such experiences normalise the university environment and help establish the belief that 'people like me' go to university.

While a group's socio-economic status is demonstrably the strongest indicator of its collective educational outcomes, socio-economic background cannot be viewed as the sole determinant of an individual's or group's success; nor should the resistance to change in rates of transition to university among the low socio-economic group be viewed as impossible to change. This research indicates a young person's embodied cultural capital, while doubtless entrenched by the time he or she reaches secondary school, is nonetheless open to alteration. Even Bourdieu, who emphasised the primacy of the pedagogic work that takes place in the home and the difficulty of altering entrenched dispositions, acknowledged a role for human agency and personal choice in changing an individual's life chances. Indeed, "education is not just about the (re)production of the social order but also about change" (Collins & Thomson, 1997, p. 7). This chapter now turns to exploring what social and cultural capital theories offer on the notion of change.

Bourdieu's theory of habitus has sometimes been subjected to criticism "on the basis of its latent determinism" (Reay, 2004, p. 432); however, Bourdieu challenged this view, arguing that, while habitus can be constraining, it can also enable the individual to draw on transformative courses of action (Bourdieu, 1999). Although habitus is primarily acquired as a product of early experience, in particular socialisation within the family, it is continually transformed by an individual's encounters with the outside world (Reay, 2004, p. 434).

It is clearly possible cultural capital can be acquired beyond the limitations of family background since some working class students do succeed in the current education system. Fernandez-Kelly (2002), for example, referred to groups of Chicanos

— students of Mexican descent — graduating from Princeton. In addition to individuals moving beyond the cultural capital of their immediate family background to succeed at school and beyond, there is also clear evidence that beliefs can be changed across larger groups in the community. The progress that has been made in the past two decades against gender disadvantage in education — as evidenced by the increased number of girls taking maths and science for the Higher School Certificate, and the increased number of women entering university, even in non-traditional fields — is one example. This instance shows that a change in beliefs — in this case, about the relevance and attainability of maths and science, and of university study, to females — is possible on a community-wide scale.

Less clear are the processes that might prove most efficient in changing pre-existing knowledge and beliefs about university among students from low socio-economic backgrounds. Bourdieu's theory of social and cultural capital asserts that capital is available outside the home and that therefore students' futures are not determined solely by the socio-economic status of their parents. Bourdieu argued that, while habitus tends to be confirmed through immersion in a field that reproduces existing dispositions, it could also be transformed through experiences that either raise or lower an individual's expectations (Reay, 2004, p. 435). This suggests that providing experiences which explicitly challenge young people's pre-existing dispositions might facilitate the transformation of these dispositions.

A key component of an intervention might then be activities that raise young people's awareness of their alternatives, and provide explicit encouragement for them to aim high and to consider university among their post-secondary alternatives. A characteristic of such an intervention might also need to be an on-going commitment, the durable nature of embodied dispositions reminding us to avoid the trap of 'quick-fix' approaches.

2.8 THE ROLE OF BRIDGING SOCIAL CAPITAL IN CHANGING HABITUS

The social capital literature indicates that, while families provide the strong ties, it is often the conscientious work of mentors outside the family — counsellors and teachers, for example — who form the weak ties necessary to make the difference:

Decisive in the constellation of factors that determined their educational success was the active presence of persons mediating between themselves and institutionally structured opportunities (Fernandez-Kelly, 2002, p. 73).

McLean (2004) reviewed two studies, Levine and Nideffer (1996) and Helge (1991), both of which indicate the importance of a mentor. In each study, contact with a relevant person was seen as critical. The mentor was shown to provide practical information, a component of cultural capital on course choice, subject options, costs, and, importantly, a sense of what university life is like. In addition, for young people needing encouragement to see university as an achievable option, a suitable mentor, here construed as bridging social capital, helped students to see that “people like me can and do go to university” (McLean, 2004, p. 6). In this respect, a role model can help young people to envisage themselves at university.

Cote (1996) also asserts an individual should be able to acquire identity capital regardless of social class background; however, they would require access to other sources of identity from outside their immediate social world. This suggests introducing young people to role models they can relate to, for example, university students who come from similar backgrounds to their own, would build their awareness of their own strengths and encourage them to explore their alternatives and, ultimately, to re-construct their identities (Cote, 1996, p. 197). The self-efficacy literature on the role of vicarious learning, and the importance of similarity to the models observed, supports this notion. A characteristic of a successful intervention program, then, would be the provision of access to bridging social capital. That is, opportunities for young people to interact with academically successful role models from backgrounds similar to their own.

2.8.1 The role of real-world experiences in changing habitus

Changing entrenched habitus is notoriously difficult. Bourdieu compared the interaction of habitus and field to the unconsciousness of a fish in water, saying, “[w]hen habitus encounters a social world of which it is the product, it is like a fish in water: it does not feel the weight of the water and it takes the world about itself for granted” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, cited in Reay, 2004, p. 436). The literature on attitude change shows information alone is insufficient to alter these taken-for-granted dispositions. To Bourdieu, a special mode of inculcation was required if the secondary

pedagogic work (in this case, a university intervention) was to bring about the complete substitution of the primary habitus for another —which he termed a radical conversion, or *metanoia* — as opposed to simply confirming the primary habitus. He suggested the possibility of the effect of an extraordinary event, a critical moment in shaping thinking about future prospects:

It is the critical moment when, breaking with the ordinary experience of time as a simple re-enactment of a past or a future inscribed in the past, all things become possible (at least apparently), when future prospects appear really contingent, future events really indeterminate (Bourdieu, 1988, p. 182).

A critical moment can occur when an individual encounters a world outside their everyday experience: “[w]hen habitus enters a field with which it is not familiar, the resulting disjuncture can generate change and transformation” (Reay, 2004, p. 436). This suggests involvement in the as yet unfamiliar world of a university has the potential to transform young people’s pre-existing dispositions towards university.

In psychological terms, the most powerful way to build positive and resilient self-efficacy is through what is termed enactive mastery experiences. An individual’s own performances offer “the most reliable guides for assessing efficacy” (Schunk, 1991, pp. 208-209) as they provide “the most authentic evidence of whether one can muster whatever it takes to succeed” (Bandura, 1997, p. 80). This suggests that providing opportunities for young people to experience success in university work would raise their belief in their ability to cope with university work.

Building on Bourdieu’s concept of the critical moment, Yair (2003) borrowed the metaphor of ‘the big bang’ from physics. According to Yair, big bang effects, which are short, intense, decisive episodes, produce extreme levels of motivation and can have long-term effects over the life course. He argued the widely used cumulative model of school effects wherein learning is a slow, incremental and linear process is reductionist and does not explain the efficacy of short-term intervention programs (2003, p. 126). Yair did not present an either/or scenario. Rather, he suggested students’ career choices might be influenced by a small number of decisive experiences that build upon a foundation of incremental processes. One of the major outcomes of such big bang moments is self-empowerment, which encourages individuals to envisage alternative futures, to construct new identities. In these contexts, students may be motivated to

choose a career/study path and to invest time and energy in planning and working to achieve this goal. Thus, their aspirations drive their achievement, rather than their limited achievements or expectations of low achievement limiting their aspirations.

Similar models of changing identities come from the literature on life course and career decision-making. Antikainen and Komonen (2003) spoke of key experiences as being instrumental in the construction of identity and in transforming an individual's life course. Hodkinson, Sparkes and Hodkinson (2002) also argue both routines and turning points play a part. The central idea is the same — at a turning point, a person “goes through a transformation of identity” (Hodkinson, Sparkes & Hodkinson 2002, p. 436). A successful intervention program, then, would combine on-going commitment, the step-by-step work of laying the foundations, with extraordinary ‘real-world’ experiences and opportunities to experience success in university work. Such characteristics would, it is hypothesised, motivate and empower young people, facilitate their pragmatic decision-making, enhance their self-efficacy and ultimately transform their existing dispositions towards higher education.

2.8.2 Reproduction and social change

Bourdieu went to great lengths to show how social class positions were reproduced from one generation to the next. His work contains both an explanation of social reproduction and of systems of social change. The powerful fields of politics, economics, business and education were much more likely to reproduce “existing social inequalities rather than challenging and transforming the status quo” (Webb, Schirato & Danaher, 2002, p. xv), as the individuals that take up decision-making positions in these fields are obviously likely to benefit from a continuation of their dominance. But this is not just a deliberate act on the part of the dominant; the forgotten struggles that produce *doxa* and place the cultural arbitrary in hierarchies, see culture itself impel inequality through largely misrecognised symbolic means.

The specifically symbolic logic of distinction additionally secures material and symbolic profits for the possessors of a large cultural capital; any given cultural competence (for example, being able to read in a world of illiterates) derives a scarcity value from its distribution of cultural capital and yields profits of distinction for its owner. In other words, the share in profits which scarce cultural capital secures in class-

divided societies is based, “on the fact that not all agents have the economic and cultural means for prolonging their children’s education beyond the minimum necessary for the reproduction of the labour-power least valorised at a given moment” (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 245).

In short, the dominated suffer the double bind of lacking both the economic means to compete and the cultural proficiencies to be upwardly mobile. This becomes an economy of scale; some individuals do manage to break the binds and improve their socio-economic situation and status but most do not. Nevertheless, social change does happen and this is explained in Bourdieu’s construction of social fields. The field is a dynamic structure. Accordingly, the change of position of any agent or knowledge set within the field changes the structure of the field as a whole.

Some of the young working class people studied in this project represent the first members of their extended family to pursue post-compulsory education, so their presence in a senior secondary classroom minutely changes the field. It signifies individual upward social mobility, and is at the same time an expression of structural changes to the Australian labour market which have seen many more young people completing 12 years of schooling.

2.8.3 Cross-field effects

Rawolle (2005) provides a summative outline of all of the properties of a field suggested by Bourdieu (1993) before exploring their functioning more deeply. Rawolle believed Bourdieu described fields as structured spaces of positions that function analogously to a game. He noted they have general laws or logics that guide interactions and the stakes toward which practices are oriented. They require a socialised body endowed with a habitus that orients dispositions of agents to the stakes. Through this disposition towards the valued stakes in a field, the actions of the agent support the continuation of that social field.

Rawolle observes Bourdieu’s socialised bodies are engaged in social struggles. They compete with other agents for the stakes that are in play and the forms of capital valued in the field. They also compete over the conversion rates between different forms of capital. Finally he explains they are structured by the state of power relations

at a given point in time and produce distinctive patterns of strategies adopted by different agents relative to their own position and trajectory (Rawolle, 2005, p. 707). In terms of the potential for the fracturing of these fields he went on to observe,

Bourdieu has described the strategies that particular agents make in attempting to break into a field of which they are an outsider (Bourdieu, 1984, 1998) or of the pressures that particular fields exerted on others (Bourdieu, 1998) and the way that this pressure distorts or alters other fields (Rawolle, 2005, p. 709).

He focuses particularly on the fact that particular fields, though separable, in practice periodically interact with the stakes and practices of other fields (Rawolle, 2005, p. 722). Through his own study Rawolle observed this interrelation of fields. He notes the profound effect of the field of the media on the field of science education policy and the interaction of the field of policy with the field of media. He proposed that the interaction, which he has observed, might be usefully referred to as a cross-field effect. He observes:

Cross-field effects result from the interrelations between different fields. This is to point out something that I take to be under-recognised in Bourdieu's work: that the relative autonomy of social fields is quite specific to the distinctive products in the habitus that they produce, but that this relative autonomy presupposes some connections between fields that are taken as unquestioned (Lingard & Rawolle, 2004, p. 714).

In the sense they are not usually in contest between social fields, these connections do not usually figure as relevant to the descriptions of the particular social field. This thesis argues that these usually uncontested connections, in the form of taken-for-granted assumptions about the role and function of field-based practices, are increasingly becoming the source of contest (Rawolle, 2005, p. 714).

By shifting the spotlight from a field taken alone and focusing it on the competition and symbiosis structured between fields, Lingard and Rawolle (2004) observe interdependence between some fields. They note capital acquired in one field endowed advantage (or disadvantage) in another. That structural shifts, events, changes in value systems, on-going announcements or shifts in hierarchy in one field may impose homologous shifts in another. They conclude, "Bourdieu has not fully developed the concept of cross-field effects, concentrating more on the internal characteristics of fields as structured social spaces" (Lingard & Rawolle, 2004, p. 377).

Through the idea of the cross-field effect, Lingard and Rawolle (2004) demonstrate the value of observing the relationships between fields and the potential for effects in one field to generate fractures in another (which Bourdieu [2001] observed) to provide the opportunities for active agents to accomplish change. They theorise:

The fact that there are effects between fields would appear to suggest something about the nature of autonomous fields in their interdependence. This is to suggest that the autonomy that Bourdieu and others ascribe to fields is one related to their distinctive products, be they credentials or innovations, scandals or laws. However, these distinctive products often rely on a range of taken-for-granted conditions in order to be produced, broad conditions that only appear relevant in exceptional circumstances, or to different disciplines (Lingard & Rawolle, 2004, p. 368).

Through the theory of cross-field effects, attention may be drawn to the epicentres of change in social situations. As the relations between fields shift there is potential for the potency of the habitus of those agents within the fields to shift also. It is a concept that allows us to move beyond the confines of a single field.

Cross-field effects designate and describe phenomena and practices that are not easily classifiable into one field alone and, in particular here, those that result from the interrelations between fields. This is one way of focusing attention on changes in the relations between fields (Rawolle, 2005, p. 714).

Rawolle's observation of the cross-field effects of the media and science education policy led him to theorise a further refinement of this idea. The vigorous interaction of these two fields provided, for a period of time, a practice, which had its own autonomy and rules for the game. Consequently Rawolle proposed a refinement of Bourdieu's conceptual base. He concluded that in some cases the interaction of related fields generates a distinctive practice that is worthy of study. He proposed that where fields are struggling for common stakes then the concept field should be expanded to include temporary social fields (Rawolle, 2005, p. 722).

Bourdieu's insistence on the organic, responsive, and conflictual nature of fields demonstrates that a field by nature is not permanent. If it cannot be permanent, the term 'temporary' becomes problematic. In the broad sweep of history, all social fields may be described as more or less temporary. Wacquant pointed out that fields are

historical constellations that arise, grow, change shape, and sometimes wane or perish, over time (1998, p. 6).

Nevertheless, Rawolle's idea of cross-field effects which trigger the possibility for the development of new fields provides a compelling counter to the charges of social determinism or volunteerism that Bourdieu's theories have faced in some quarters (Butler, 1999). Wacquant actively challenged the claim that Bourdieu's theories provide too little scope for social change. He claims contention, not stasis, is the ubiquitous feature of collective life that his varied inquiries aimed at making at once visible and intelligible. Struggle, not reproduction, was the master metaphor at the core of his thought (Wacquant, 1998, p. 3).

Wacquant emphasised the tensions that exist within a field, while Rawolle illustrated the pressures exerted from the outside through the presence of other fields. The tensions between active agents from varied life experiences competing for valued capital within a field combined with the pressures from other fields and agents outside of the field provide the opportunities for fractures of transformation to occur (Butler, 1998, pp. 3-4).

2.8.4 Bourdieu and site effects

Bourdieu claimed, "if the habitat shapes the habitus, the habitus also shapes the habitat" (2000, p. 128). He underscored the relationship between social space and geographic or physical space. He described the way that physical space becomes reified social space and social relationships are impacted and manipulated through the presence of physical objects and geographic locations. He noted a particular location, or site, fosters the development of a particular habitual way of being and in turn the presence of that particular type of person shapes the way that the location is experienced and identified.

Bourdieu implicated the physical location of an agent with the process of exercising displays of power. He claimed:

In fact, social space translates into physical space, but the translation is always more or less blurred. An agent's position in social space is expressed in the site of physical space where that agent is situated (which means, for example, that anyone said to be without home or hearth or 'homeless' is

virtually without a social existence) and by the relative position that the temporary localisations (for example, honorific places, seating regulated by protocol), and especially the permanent ones (home address, business address, etc.) occupy in relation to localisations of other agents. It is also expressed in the place occupied (by right) in space by virtue of the properties (houses, apartments, or offices, land to cultivate, to use or build on, etc.) which are more or less bulky or, as one sometimes says, 'space consuming' (greater or lesser ostentation in the consumption of space being one of the forms par excellence for displaying power) (2000, p. 124).

Through long association, social realities become inscribed upon the natural world and society comes to see the identification as determined by nature rather than society. The behaviours of a group are constrained by the physical setting but also determined by the selective encouragement and discouragement offered by the group. The habitual behaviours of the group reinforce the hierarchies, which exist in that particular place. Particular spaces and places become associated with the possession of attributes that include physical, cultural and social capital.

The ability to dominate space, notably by appropriating, the rare goods (public or private) distributed there, depends on the capital possessed. Capital makes it possible to keep undesirable persons and things at a distance at the same time that it brings close-up desirable persons and things (made desirable, among other things, by their richness in capital), thereby minimising the necessary expense (notably in time) in appropriating them. Proximity in physical space allows the proximity in social space to deliver all its effects (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 127).

According to Bourdieu, the group occupying the site they wish to occupy will prescribe the type of capital an agent or group may seek to accrue. As the young people of Torquay select the type of capital they wish to pursue they are subject to particular pressures from their physical and social location. These pressures produce dispositions unique to this rural habitat. These dispositions may provide them with access to a new location or they may bar them from gaining access.

At the risk of feeling themselves out of place, individuals who move into a new space must fulfil the conditions that that space tacitly requires of its occupants. This may be the possession of a certain cultural capital, the lack of which can prevent a real appropriation of supposedly public goods or even the intention of appropriating them (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 129).

Newcomers to Torquay may not easily gain acceptance as locals as there are a number of qualities required for acceptance that take time to develop. Bourdieu explained:

Among the properties presupposed by the legitimate occupation of a site, there are some ... which are acquired only through prolonged occupation of this site and sustained association with its legitimate occupants. This is the case, obviously, with the social capital of relations, connections, or ties (and most particularly with the privileged ties of childhood or adolescent friendships) or with all the subtlest aspects of cultural and linguistic capital, such as body mannerisms and pronunciation (accents) etc., all the many attributes that makes a place of birth (and to a lesser degree, place of residence) so important (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 128).

Bourdieu's linking of physical, social and mental structures challenges the rural researcher to consider the relationship between the physical and the social setting very carefully. His recognition of the embodied nature of our response to habitat and his acknowledgement of the power relations implicit within these responses opens up a rich field for investigation. His emphasis on the privileged status of the social capital developed during adolescence, as it is expressed in the cultural capital of things like body mannerisms and pronunciation directs the gaze of the researcher to the embodied identities of the young people in Torquay. By Bourdieu's contention, the rural location of Torquay will be structured by, and inscribed on, the spatial structures and mental structures in the site.

As social space is inscribed at once in spatial structures and in the mental structures that are partly produced by the incorporation of these structures, space is one of the sites where power is asserted and exercised, and no doubt in its subtlest form, as 'symbolic violence' that goes unperceived as violence. Architectural spaces address mute injunctions directly to the body and, just as surely as court etiquette, obtain from it the reverence and respect born of distance or better yet, from being far away, at a respectful distance (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 126).

Bourdieu pointed out that the subtle forces at work in physical and social space are usually invisible to the people they are acting on. He calls these unperceived effects 'symbolic violence', acknowledging space as one of the sites where power is asserted and exercised. He also was this power distributed in a hierarchical structure. He claimed:

There is no space in a hierarchized society that is not itself hierarchized and that does not express hierarchies and social distances, in a form that is more or less distorted and above all, disguised by the naturalization effect produced by the long-term inscription of social realities in the natural world (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 124).

For Bourdieu, social engagement is shot through with power struggles over hierarchical position. As a consequence he saw physical settings exemplifying the same stratified characteristics:

The different fields, or if you like, the different, physically objectified social spaces, tend to be at least roughly superimposed: the result is a concentration of the rarest goods and their owners in certain sites of physical space (Madison Ave or Fifth Avenue in New York) which contrast in every respect with sites that, principally and sometimes exclusively, collect the most disadvantaged groups (poor suburbs, ghettos) (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 125).

2.9 CONCLUSION

In this chapter the thinking tools of Bourdieu have been outlined to introduce the ideas of capital, field, habitus and site effects as the theoretical foundation for the analysis of the social site of Torquay. The following chapter builds on this theory base to outline the methodology and methods used in this study. Bourdieu's insistence on the importance of empirical evidence when theorising about social structures and his emphasis on the need for a reflexive methodology provide this study with a firm foundation.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the study's research approach. Initial decisions were about two interrelated aspects of the research, which aim to explore the influence of characteristics of social capital in the family unit on the learning processes of students on the Northwest Coast of Tasmania. The first set of considerations is regarding philosophical perspectives, assumptions and personal experience. Second, the most appropriate research approach and methods to be used to fulfil the purpose of the research are examined.

3.2 PERSPECTIVES ON THEORY AND DESIGN

This research adopts a perspective, which is constructivist in its epistemology (Crotty, 1998; Weirsmas & Jurs, 2009). My approach to social action is interpretive in nature. These theoretical underpinnings support this study's qualitative multiple case study design.

3.2.1 Perspective on knowledge: constructivist theory

Reflections upon assumptions of reality led to an identification with the constructivist epistemological position that there is no objective truth or meaning to be discovered but that meaning is constructed (Creswell, 2007, 2009; Crotty, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, 2005; Wiersma & Jurs, 2009). Crotty (1998) defines constructivist theory as the belief that,

... all knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, developed and transmitted within an essentially social context (p. 75).

This position asserts there can be a variety of meanings given to the same phenomenon by different people, who construct meaning depending on their social and cultural backgrounds and experiences. This position allows a researcher to look for a multiplicity and complexity of views rather than narrowing meanings into few categories or ideas. The researcher can "rely as much as possible on the participants' views of the situation being studied" (Creswell, 2003, p. 8).

The social constructivism position holds there is an inevitable historical and socio-cultural dimension to the construction of meaning as we develop against a backdrop of shared understanding, practices and language. The use of the social constructionist view allows the researcher to investigate personally the variety of influences upon students located on the Northwest Coast of Tasmania to enact their identity in the form of engagement with the learning process. As has been previously noted, an interpretation of data is made that is coloured by personal experience and background.

These views about the nature of meaning making are aligned with the interpretivist approach, which looks for “culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social world” (Crotty, 1998, p. 67). They contrast with the positivist approach, which seeks to discover natural laws so people can predict and control events (Creswell, 2009, p. 91). Interpretive research undertaken in a school should viewed,

... as a lived experience. Understanding the meaning of the process or experience constitutes the knowledge to be gained from an inductive, hypothesis ... or theory generating (rather than a deductive or testing) mode of inquiry (Merriam, 1998, p. 4).

The knowledge gained from this research is an understanding of the meaning of the students’ experiences in developing their identity.

3.2.2 Bourdieu on methodology

Bourdieu’s position on research methodology was that a researcher couldn’t grasp the most profound logic of the social world unless one becomes immersed in the specificity of an empirical reality (Bourdieu, 1993b, p. 271). This study is not presented as a disclosure of the most profound logic of the social world but it does record a process of immersion in the specificity of an empirical reality. This research is a response to the challenges set by Bourdieu. As a close study of a specific social group it hopes to move beyond the abstract to discover lived sites of social engagement.

Bourdieu used the image of the game to describe the act of applying a research survey to a social situation. He illustrated the way that the recording of a particular

moment in the constant state of social flux imposes an illusory fixity to the process of the interplay of resources:

Like a photograph of a game of marbles or poker which freezes the balance sheet of assets (marbles or chips) at a given stage, the survey freezes a moment in the struggle in which the agents put back into play, at every moment, the capital they have acquired in early phases of the struggle, which may imply a power over the struggle itself and therefore over the capital held by others (Bourdieu, 1984a, p. 246).

Bourdieu stated his position on the purpose of social research very strongly, by contending that when sociology remains at a highly abstract and formal level, it contributes nothing. When it gets down to the details of real life, however, it is an instrument that people can apply to themselves for quasi-clinical purposes (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 199).

Bourdieu did not limit his exposition of the role of sociology to a purely therapeutic function; he also claimed a liberatory role; but this liberation is bound by constraints.

The true freedom that sociology offers is to give us a small chance of knowing what game we play and of minimising the ways in which we are manipulated by the forces of the field in which we evolve, as well as by the embodied social forces that operate from within us. I am not suggesting that sociology solves all the problems of the world, far from it, but that it allows us to discern the sites where we do indeed enjoy a degree of freedom and those where we do not so that we do not waste our energy struggling over terrains that offer us no leeway (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 199).

The freedom at the detailed level that Bourdieu refers to, is not the sort usually referred to as political or even social freedom. The participants in this study would be offended at the suggestion that they require to be freed; however, Bourdieu's model puts us all in need of liberation. He described our situation as evolving under forces of which we cannot be aware because of our closeness to them. He suggested that some of these forces impose constraints, which are very difficult to act against while others offer some flexibility.

The freedom he referred to is simply awareness, an understanding of the nature of the forces around us. It appears to offer a liberty within constraint, an option of choice based on awareness of the nature of the social laws, which govern our existence. Given this emphasis on the development of quasi-clinical instruments of liberation it

may be surprising that Bourdieu's research did not focus on the individual. Instead, he claimed:

The notion of the field reminds us that the true object of social science is not the individual, even though one cannot construct a field if not through individuals, since the information necessary for statistical analysis is generally attached to individuals or institutions. It is the field which is primary and must be the focus of the research operations (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 107).

The field is identified as the primary focus of social research but a field cannot be separated from the dispositions, which constitute it. Bourdieu expected the researcher to include an investigation of both the logic of the field and the capital and habitus within the field in what he acknowledged is a cyclical iterative process:

People are at once founded and legitimised to enter the field by their possessing a definite configuration of properties. One of the goals of research is to identify these active properties, these efficient characteristics, that is, these forms of specific capital. There is thus a sort of hermeneutic circle: in order to construct the field, one must identify the forms of specific capital that operate within it, and to construct the forms of specific capital one must know the specific logic of the field. There is an endless to and fro movement in the research process that is quite lengthy and arduous (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 107).

In his or her quest to identify the logic of a field and the form of the capital negotiated in it the researcher must also take into account that the field is not static nor is the value of the capital fixed. Bourdieu pointed out the researcher's capacity to impact on the negotiation of the value of the coinage of capitals within different settings:

In every epoch there is a constant struggle over the rate of exchange between the different kinds of capital, the struggle among the different factions of the dominant class, whose overall capital is composed in differing proportions of the various kinds of capital ... cultural capital, economic capital, etc. are themselves at stake in struggles within the reality that we are studying and that what we say about them will itself become a stake in the struggles (Bourdieu, 1993b, p. 33).

3.3 RESEARCH APPROACH

This research is underpinned by the belief that quantitative measuring of social capital does not adequately capture the real world contexts of social capital, or the understanding, relational or processes among the individuals involved. A number of

important social capital characteristics of individuals and communities such as personal subjectivities, perceptions and beliefs cannot be adequately reduced to numbers or adequately understood without reference to the local context in which people live. The choice of methodology was influenced by an understanding of how individuals come to know the social world and by an understanding of the nature of the social world.

The methodology for this research is located within a qualitative paradigm. Creswell (1998) defines qualitative research as an inquiry process of “understanding a social or human problem, based on building a complex, holistic picture, formed with words, reporting detailed views of informants, and conducted in a natural setting” (p. 15). The essential characteristics of qualitative research are:

- the goal of eliciting understanding and meaning;
- the researcher as primary instrument of data collection and analysis;
- the use of field work;
- an inductive orientation to analysis; and
- findings that are richly descriptive (Merriam, 1998, p. 11).

The strength of qualitative research derives primarily from its inductive approach, its focus on specific situations or people, and its emphasis on words rather than numbers.

There are many reasons why qualitative methods are the most appropriate and fruitful in achieving the research purpose. The exploratory nature of qualitative research is particularly appropriate when little is known about which factors might be important to examine (Creswell, 2005). Previous research has focused on identifying quantifiable levels of educational achievement, difficulties of regional students seeking to continue their post-compulsory education and the factors involved in student choices (Abbott & Kilpatrick, 2002; Kilpatrick & Abbott-Chapman, 2007; Kilpatrick & Loechel, 2004). In a general sense, issues revolving around educational achievement are framed in a broader context of educational encouragement or discouragements of students have been a topic of discussion in associated literature (James, Win, Baldwin, Hepworth, McInnis & Stephanou, 1999). No specific research on family influence of Northwest Coast regional students has been undertaken, at the time of writing.

Related to the exploratory nature of qualitative research is the emerging nature of qualitative research design. Qualitative research design should be strategically

conducted, yet be flexible and contextual in nature. This characteristic is valuable for this research because it allows for change during the research process. As the intention was to discover from the study participants what influence family social capital network factors have on their learning process, the nature of these factors could not be known *a priori* and indeed could have changed during the research. The research design needed to be “sufficiently open and flexible to permit exploration of whatever the phenomenon under study offers for inquiry” and to remain “emergent even after data collection begins” (Patton, 2002, p. 255).

Qualitative methods are considered a good source for understanding the particular context in which participants act and the affect that this context has on their actions (Cresswell, 2000; Maxwell, 2005). It also permits a spotlight on the “actual practices in situ, looking at how social interactions are routinely enacted” (Silverman, 2003, p. 359). This type of focus is required to obtain data focused on students’ accounts of the influence their parental, peer and school relationships have on personal expectations and academic achievement.

A number of benefits are derived from developing theory *via* qualitative methods. A number of theorists (including Creswell, 2003, 2005, 2009; Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, 2005) assert qualitative research has an advantage in generating results and theories that are understandable and experimentally credible, both to the people being studied and to researchers. Going into the field, as is the practice with qualitative research methods, allows a focus both on the perspectives of the people involved in the phenomena or events under study and on gaining an understanding of the particular setting in which the phenomena or events take place.

3.3 1 Limited mixed methods approach

Bourdieu also inspires the employment of the limited mixed methods approach. He has used mixed methods successfully in a wide array of influential studies. Here, the suitability of combining quantitative questionnaire data and qualitative student interview data is highlighted. Both qualitative and quantitative methods share scientific principles, yet they differ in significant ways. Whilst ‘objective reality’ can never be truly captured in social research, traditionally, the combination of methods, or triangulation, attempts to secure an in-depth understanding of the research questions (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p.

8). Combining methods is best understood 'as a strategy that adds rigor, breadth, complexity, richness and depth to any inquiry' (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p. 8).

The aim of combining methods is to merge features of both, with the intent of limiting the weaknesses of each while maintaining their respective strengths. Where the quantitative method attempts to measure objective facts, qualitative methods construct social reality and cultural meanings. Quantitative methods focus on variables where reliability is key; qualitative methods focus on interactive processes where authenticity is the key. Where quantitative approaches attempt to be value free and independent of context, values are present and explicit in qualitative approaches and they are situationally constrained. Quantitative methods involve many participants and require statistical analysis, whereas qualitative methods provide fewer participants but are analysed thematically. The researcher is relatively detached in quantitative processes, but very much involved in the qualitative processes.

In this way, quantitative methods are 'data condensers', used in order to see the big picture; while qualitative methods are 'data enhancers' that enable the researcher to see more aspects of what is being investigated more clearly. Arguably, this (although very minimal) use of a mixed-methods approach strengthens the comparative capacity across data, by identifying levels of social capital via a questionnaire and then clarifying and enhancing the understanding through individual one-on-one interviews of the student participants.

3.4 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH: THE ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER

Qualitative research is context-specific with the role of the researcher being one of the important factors in the situation. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world into a series of representations in the form of field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings and memos to the self. At this level, research involves an interpretative, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring to them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 3).

3.5 RESEARCHER IDENTITY

This research was envisaged as a process of knowledge generation using a constructivist epistemological position, which holds that there is no objective truth or meaning to be discovered but that meaning is constructed. In the context of this research, the role of researcher was seen to be an active co-construction with the participants of new knowledge of the social world, where meaning was emergent from the material and organic strata rather than a product of them. This research is underpinned by the belief that the researcher is a critical instrument in the process of data gathering and analysis.

In conducting this research, the position of the researcher as a teacher in the regional Catholic college is acknowledged. The potential issues that may have been of concern to participants were raised early in the research and addressed. These included separation of the research from the professional responsibilities of the researcher and an on-going commitment to confidentiality between the researcher and participants. As the project continued, data confirmed the researcher's personal position in the school was accepted by participants as contributing to an understanding of the issues (which were raised, by participants in the course of the data gathering).

The researcher is challenged to accept responsibility for the role they play in the negotiation with the field. This intervention and potential to do harm must be justified by a corresponding potential to do some social good. Bourdieu claimed that by exposing the historically created naturalised state of the social laws governing a field, the researcher provides social liberation by rendering these laws vulnerable to change:

[k]nowledge of the law gives them a chance, a possibility of countering the effects of the law a possibility that does not exist so long as law is unknown and operates unknown to those who undergo it. In short, just as it de-naturalizes, so sociology de-fatalizes (Bourdieu, 1993b, p. 26).

The laws governing the field of practice are naturalised, as they are the structuring structures (Calhoun *et. al.*, 1993) that produced us. The determining, or fatal power, of these laws can only be challenged once their status as natural laws has been exposed as a social construct. The researcher is thus charged with the role of exposing the social laws at work in a field through the examination of the dispositions and capital in play in the field.

In *Sociology in Question* (1993b), Bourdieu returned to the images of the photograph and the game to illustrate the role of the researcher in recording not only the nature of the capital at play in a particular social context but also the strategies being engaged and the shared understandings of the rules of the game. Again he noted the researcher is fixing a moment, which is by nature dynamic. He acknowledged that the world described by the researcher is at the moment of recording always about to shift to a new state (Bourdieu, 1993b, p. 35).

Wacquant (1998) points out that the researcher as the external observer is in a position to identify the constraints acting upon this act of apparent freedom and to ascertain the objective regularities they obey (1998, p. 8). He claims the researcher can “decode the underwritten musical score according to which the actions of agents, each of whom believe she is improvising her own melody, are organized” (Bourdieu, 1983, p. 89, cited in Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 8).

Bourdieu challenged the researcher to identify the objective regularities or social laws acting upon the agents within a field to uncover the most profoundly buried structures of the various social worlds which constitute the social universe, as well as the mechanisms which tend to ensure the reproduction or the transformation (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 7).

3.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Decisions about methodology (Crotty, 1988) or strategy of inquiry (Creswell, 2003; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005) used in the research are focused on choosing from a wide variety of valid types which would best achieve the research aim and research questions. This research employed the research methodology of case study (Yin, 2003). A definition that captures the most important features of case study research as an empirical inquiry is that it “investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (Yin, 2003c, p. 13). A case can be one of many things such as an individual, a group, an institution or a community. It can be singular, or there can be multiple cases.

Case study research methodologies are broadly defined as qualitative research procedures for describing, analysing, and interpreting a culture-sharing group's shared patterns of behaviour, beliefs, and language that develop over time. A central feature of the definition is the term 'culture' which comprises everything having to do with human behaviour and belief such as language, rituals, economic and political structures. To understand the patterns of a culture-sharing group, the case study researcher typically spends considerable time in the field observing, interviewing and gathering documents about the group in order to understand their culture-sharing behaviours, beliefs and language (Creswell, 2005; Stake, 1998, 2005; Yin, 2003, 2006).

Employing a case study approach allowed for the acquisition of the meaning "of the behaviour, language and interaction of the cultural-sharing group" (Creswell, 2005, p. 202) in relation to the influence of social capital conditions experienced by students in their family environment such as networks, information channels in the social structure and trust and influence they have upon the formation of student subjectivity and learning outcomes.

It is important the boundaries of the case are readily distinguishable from events, behaviour or actions that are outside the boundaries of the case (Stake, 2005). The case boundaries need to be harmonious with, and explicit in, the research question asked and data collection methods used. The boundaries of the case may also be derived from the implicit boundaries of "time, geography, place, and event, and are thus almost pre-existing, real and empirically bound" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 12).

This research was bound by time and place. The period of data collection was over a two-year period between February 2008 and March 2010. The research took place at Caritas Catholic College located in a major regional city on the Northwest Coast of Tasmania. It is argued the sampling strategy of typical case functioned as a boundary in form of the selection of student participants who were selected to be involved in the research.

Numerous classifications of case studies have been suggested (Burns, 1994; Stake, 1998, 2005; Yin, 2003, 2006). This research utilised an explanatory, multiple case study design. Evidence from multiple case studies is often considered more compelling, and the overall study is therefore regarded as being more robust through the

importance placed upon replication logic (Stake, 1998, 2005; Yin, 2003, 2006). Each individual case study consists as a whole study, in which facts are gathered from various sources and conclusions drawn from those facts.

3.7 ETHICAL APPROVAL

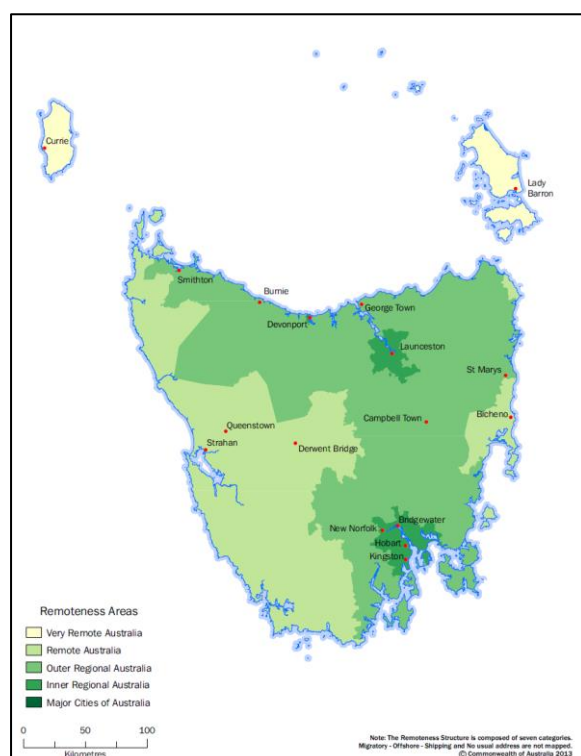
Ethical approval for this research (Reference Number: H10198) was gained from the Tasmania Social Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee at the University of Tasmania. The researcher has followed all procedures and practices required to attain ethics approval from the committee to carry out the study. Ethical concerns considered in this research used accepted principles and practices such as informed consent, voluntary participation, right to discontinue, privacy and confidentiality, avoidance of deception, debriefing and publication of findings (Burns, 2000, pp. 20-21). In order to maintain anonymity the names of all participants and the places of all research sites were omitted, and pseudonyms used instead.

3.8 SELECTION OF RESEARCH LOCATION

This research was conducted in Torquay, a regional city located on the Northwest Coast of Tasmania. The town has a population of approximately 25 500. The city of Torquay is classified as inner regional Australia according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics Remoteness Structure Map (Figure 3.1). Torquay is serviced by five primary schools and three high schools. Senior secondary education (Years 11 and 12)

can also be undertaken at two colleges located in the city.

This study's research location was Caritas Catholic College. Caritas has existed as a school at its current site for over fifty years. In 1990 the college extended its student cohort to include senior secondary education, Years 11 and 12. At the time of the research, the college had a student population of 704 students. A total population of 179 senior



secondary students participated in this research.

Figure 3.1 ABS Remoteness Structure Map (ABS)

3.8.1 Gaining access to the location and participants

Permission to conduct research in this location was obtained from the Principal and the Caritas College Board. The University of Tasmania's detailed Ethics Guidelines and prior approval ensured obtaining permission was straightforward.

Initial contact with the school occurred through a series of 'gatekeepers' (Creswell, 1998, p. 117) at Caritas Catholic College. Gatekeepers require information about the study such as the reason for site selection, what will be done on site, whether this will be disruptive, how the results will be reported and whether there are any gains to the gatekeeper and the participants of the study (Creswell, 1998, pp. 117-118). Full information about the research was provided at each step of the access and permission process.

The Principal of Caritas was provided with an Information Sheet (Appendix B) and a Statement of Informed Consent (Appendix C) at a meeting arranged with him. The principal was particularly interested in: ensuring that consent was obtained from the students, parents/guardians and teaching staff; clarifying the educational benefits of the research for the students; identifying the way teachers were required to assist with the research; and the dissemination of the study's results at the end of the research. The principal took the research proposal to the Caritas College Board and they supported the use of the college as a research site.

Four senior secondary teachers volunteered to participate in a focus group interview after the researcher had provided an overview of the project at a staff meeting. The senior secondary teachers were not the primary focus of the research but seen rather as 'gatekeepers' (Creswell, 1998, p. 118) who provided professional insight and knowledge to identity criteria for the purposeful sampling strategy of typical cases.

The researcher invited students to participate in the study during visits to secondary classes. At this time the researcher also explained the study to the students, answered any questions the students had regarding the research and distributed Information Sheets (Appendix D) and Statements of Informed Consent (Appendix E) for

the students' attention. The researcher also placed information in the school's newsletter to inform parents/guardians about the research and provide the opportunity for students who were absent at the times of the senior secondary class visits a chance to participate in the research.

Interested students identified themselves through returning a section of the Information Sheet to a box located in the school's administration office. After a period of two weeks the researcher and the senior secondary 'gatekeeper' teachers from the school scrutinised returned interested forms to gauge the 'typical' (Patton, 1990, p. 169) nature of the student from the point of view of the data defined at the previous focus group interview.

An information package was sent home with students who were identified as being 'typical' (Patton, 1990, p. 169) of the student population in senior secondary students at Caritas College. The package contained an Information Sheet (Appendix H) and Statement of Informed Consent (Appendix I), which outlined the role of potential student participants in the project, as well as providing an overview of what was required of parents/guardians in the research. The parents/guardians were required to complete a questionnaire if their child participated in the research project. The parents/guardians were not the primary focus of the research but provided a context with regard to the level of social capital experienced by the student participants.

If the completed parental/guardian and student consent forms were returned, the researcher phoned the student to arrange an interview. The researcher also contacted the parents/guardian to explain the function of the social capital questionnaire in the research.

3.8.2 Sampling

In order to build a picture of the influence of characteristics of social capital in the family unit on the learning process of students in the Northwest of Tasmania, a very specific group of individuals was required. To obtain the data that would be most helpful in understanding this, a particular type of purposeful sample (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Patton, 1990) was required. Purposeful sampling is based on a sample of information-rich cases that are studied in depth. Unlike quantitative random sampling,

there are no assumptions that all members of the population are equivalent data sources; rather, those selected are believed to be information-rich cases (Weirisma & Jurs, 2000).

The goal of purposeful sampling is to attain a sample of qualitative inquiry from which the researcher “can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research” (Patton, 1990, p. 169). The purposeful sampling strategy of typical cases (Patton, 1990; Wiersma & Jurs, 2009) was used in this research. Typical case sampling selects units that are considered typical of the phenomena under study.

In the context of Caritas College, the students selected were identified from the criteria formulated by the researcher and gatekeepers during focus group meetings. The criteria for identifying the typical senior secondary student at Caritas College were:

- they lived in the city of Torquay or surrounding districts;
- they played some team sport inside and outside of school;
- they had a part-time job;
- they came from a two-parent family; and
- one or both of their parents was employed.

Yin (1994) contended that in multiple case studies, no hard-and-fast rules exist about the number of cases, which are required to satisfy the requirements of the replication strategy. The number of cases required to reach saturation determines sample size. The sample participants should be selected explicitly to encompass instances in which the phenomena under study are likely to be found. This research achieved a sample size of six case studies. Similar case studies in the area of social capital research (Sixsmith & Boneham, 2003; Falk, 1998, 2000; Kilpatrick *et. al.*, 1998) ranged in sampling size from one to twenty cases. The students selected for the research could be identified as being ‘well-resourced individuals’ but were selected on the basis of meeting the identified criteria.

3.9 DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES

There are several ways of collecting data in qualitative research. Theorists (Stake 1994, 2005, 2008; Yin, 2006) suggest no single data collection technique has an advantage over any other. In fact, various techniques for data collection are highly complementary and a strong study should use as many as possible. This research

utilised case study techniques of data collection from interviews, participant observation, physical artefacts and archival records (Burns, 2000; Stake 2008). The research also utilised questionnaires to determine overall aggregate levels of specific characteristics of social capital in the family unit and the students participants.

3.9.1 Participant observation

Observation has been acknowledged as being important to all case study work. Stake (2008) emphasised the importance of reflection, “in the thick of what was going on” (p. 42). Observations in a natural setting are normally described as being direct observations or participant observations (Stake, 1994, 2008; Yin, 2003c). Direct observation in a case study occurs when a researcher visits a site to observe and study participants in a passive way. Participant observation is a unique mode of observation in which the researcher may actually participate in the events being studied (Stake, 1994, 2005, 2008; Yin, 2003c).

This research uses the participant observation style of participant-as-observer. Yin (2006) contended participant-as-observer is undertaken by researchers who combine their professional work role with that of their case study researcher role. The setting for the case study research was the place of employment of the researcher. This meant the fieldwork was carried out in a framework that the participants in the study were familiar with, and where they identified with the researcher and had been involved with him during some point of their schooling life.

In the early stages of data collection on the site, the researcher undertook informal observations of student participants in the classroom using the observation frame contained in the observational schedule (Appendix J). The observations undertaken in the classroom constituted an informal approach, which sought to identify examples of the operationalization of specific social capital groupings and associated elements.

Brewer (2000) argues the researcher who uses the participant-as-observer approach needs to develop certain personal qualities. The primary quality is to maintain the balance between insider and outsider status through being able to identify with people under study and get close to them, but maintain a professional distance, which

allows adequate observation and data collection. “Going native” (Creswell, 2009, p. 455) is where the observer loses their critical faculties and becomes an ordinary member of the field; this position is considered one to be avoided. A proper balance between the participant-as-observer dual roles as part insider and part outsider gives the opportunity “to be simultaneously member and non-member, and to participate while also reflecting critically on what is being observed and gathered while doing so” (Brewer, 2000, p. 60).

3.9.2 Interviews

Interviews were a major source of data, and provided opportunities for in-depth discussions with the student participants. The data collection technique of interviewing offers the opportunity to access the two principal uses of case study research — obtaining the descriptions and interpretations of others. Stake (2008) believes undertaking interviews in case study research is the main road to acquiring the multiple realities of participants. This research used the interviewing styles of focus group interview and one-on-one interviewing (Creswell, 2005, p. 215).

This research employed semi-structured interview schedules for both the focus group interviews and the one-on-one interviews. A direction was provided for the interview so the content of the research topic was covered. Semi-structured interviewing allows greater flexibility than the formal approach while also generating a valid response from the informant’s perception of reality. The semi-structured interview schedules were carefully designed to obtain data, which would significantly assist the research. The questions were piloted with colleagues. The piloting was aimed at identifying ambiguities, helping to clarify the wording of questions and permitting early detection of necessary additions or omissions.

A focus group interview is the process of collecting data through interviews with a group of typically four to six individuals. The focus group interview approach can be used to help collect shared understandings of specific topics from several different people, as well as specific members in the group (Creswell, 2005).

Two focus group interviews were held with a ‘gatekeeper’ (Creswell, 2005, p. 118), a senior secondary teacher who, in the first meeting, assisted in defining the

specific criteria for the study's sampling strategy of 'typical case' (Patton, 1990, p. 169). A focus group interview schedule (Appendix K) was used to help generate discussion. The second focus group meeting was held with the same individuals to identify students who best represented the typical criteria from among those who had returned their forms. The criteria for the sampling strategy are discussed in Section 3.10.

One-on-one interviews are a data collection process whereby the researcher asks questions to, and records answers from, only one informant at a time (Creswell, 2008, p. 226). One-on-one interviews are good for informants, who are not too timid to speak, are articulate and who comfortably share ideas.

The one-on-one interviews were conducted with the help of the Interview Schedule (Appendix L). The schedule contained a combination of open and closed questions. The closed questions were used to collect base background data about the student and their families. The open-ended questions were intended to provide the respondents with an opportunity to develop ideas and elaborate on points of interest. This was crucial to discover the nature of the social capital characteristics in play, and to explore the respondents' personal accounts of their experiences and feelings.

3.9.3 Questionnaires

Questionnaires have a number of clear benefits as well as weaknesses. For example, respondents can be unwilling to provide detailed and revealing information, particularly if time-consuming; problems can arise from the distribution and return of the questionnaire instruments especially ensuring completed questionnaires; and responses can be lacking in depth. Gillham (2000) noted data from questionnaires "can appear (and usually are) thin, abstract and superficial" (p. 62). Although potentially problematic, questionnaires can be administered quickly and therefore be a relatively economical method of gathering preliminary data capable of informing later stages of data collection. They can be an effective way of identifying points of interest to contextualise or raise during interviews.

3.9.4 Documents

Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) contend documents might come in a spectrum of public to private (p. 159). At the private end of the spectrum, numerous anecdotal

accounts of everyday life can be explored by the researcher to help generate data for their study. This research collected a number of documents located in the public domain such as:

- the Caritas College newsletter;
- a subject selection handbooks for Years 9 through to 12; and
- an information package for new staff to the college.

The researcher was also able to access documents from the My School website, which provided detailed educational, economic and cultural material about Caritas Catholic College.

3.9.5 Data recording

All interviews undertaken in this research were recorded using a digital voice recorder. Participants ignored the presence of this recording device. At the end of each interview, participants would regularly add to our conversations as they were preparing to leave the room. After the interview participant had left the room, these interview additions would be recorded as field notes.

The researcher transcribed all of the interview data. This practice allowed the opportunity to engage with and reconsider the material at a deeper level (Easton, McComish & Greenberg, 2000, p. 707). After the initial transcription, the researcher played each audio recording to check for accuracy, and thereby added to “the trustworthiness of the study and assisted in establishing dependability and confirmability” (Easton *et. al.*, 2000, p. 707). During the transcription process, the researcher de-identified the data, assigning pseudonyms for all named people and places (Stake, 2008; Yin, 2003) and recorded these in a secure electronic document.

3.10 DATA ANALYSIS

All interview data in this research was analysed using the methodological approach of constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2000, 2006). Charmaz (2005) assert a “constructivist grounded theory adopts grounded theory guidelines as tools but does not subscribe to the objectivist, positivist assumptions in its earlier foundations” (p. 509). Constructivist grounded theory does not hold data simply await discovery in an external world or that methodological procedures will correct limited views of the

studied world. Nor does it assume that impartial observers enter the research scene without an interpretive frame of reference (Charmaz, 2005, p. 509). Constructivist grounded theory allows the conceptual framework to develop from the data. It requires the researcher to conduct analysis during the data collection stage of their project.

The initial stages of data analysis occurred through the use of line-by-line coding which required the researcher to code each line of the written data (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser, 1978). Initial coding allowed the possibility of separating data into categories and to see processes. Charmaz (2006) asserts “careful word-by-word, line-by-line, incident-by-incident coding moves you towards fulfilling two criteria for completing a grounded theory analysis: fit and relevance” (p. 54). The study fits the empirical world when the researcher has developed codes and developed them into categories, which crystallise participants’ experiences. It has relevance when the researcher presents an insightful analytic framework that interprets what is happening and makes relationships between implicit processes and structures visible.

The second major coding process in this research was achieved through focused coding. Focused coding refers to, “using the significant and/or frequent earlier codes to sift through large amounts of data” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 57). Focused coding requires decisions to be made about which of the initial codes and categories make the most analytic sense to categorise the data incisively and completely. Focused coding is an active process whereby the researcher decides what trends are evident and noteworthy.

Axial coding was also utilised to analyse the research data. Axial coding relates categories to subcategories, specifies the properties and dimensions of a category and helps to reassemble data that has been fractured during the initial coding to give coherence to the emerging analysis (Charmaz, 2006, p. 60). Theoretical coding represents the fourth step in coding data. Theoretical codes conceptualise how the substantive codes may relate to each other as a hypotheses to be integrated into theory. They help the researcher maintain the conceptual level in writing about concepts and their interrelations (Charmaz, 2006, p. 63)

The data generated from participant observations in senior secondary classroom were guided by the use of an observation schedule and the use of field notes by the

researcher. The schedule was used to record naturalistic observations. The schedule was designed as a tool to help the broad qualitative analysis within the research, with ratings assigned to particular practices according to whether they were 'not evident', 'evident' or 'very evident'. The schedule was also used to describe the extent of particular practices. The observation schedule and its four categories provided useful examples of social capital practices, which are regarded as being important indicators of personal behaviour and social practices displayed by individuals with high levels of social capital. Using grounded theory, the data from the observation schedule was also analysed in conjunction with a more detailed set of field notes.

An aggregated data analysis method was used to aid the analysis of the questionnaire data and a score was given to each of the three strands of social capital to understand the broad trends in the data. Each question had an equal weighting and the scores for each question were added together. The outcome, therefore, was a scale that scored the individual on the extent of their social capital within the three strands, bonding, bridging and linking (Woolcock, 1998) and an overall social capital score for each individual. Each of the aggregated scores were analysed against socio-economic characteristics.

The questions in the questionnaire were adapted from a set of social capital questions devised by Bullen and Onyx (1998) for a study of five communities in New South Wales. These questions focused on the size of a person's social networks and their amount of social contact. At the time it was thought the size and strength of a person's networks could be used as a proxy measure of their social capital. However, some people can have strong networks that do not provide them with significant resources or opportunities (Portes, 1998). Changes were therefore made to the questionnaire to differentiate between the benefits accrued through bonding, bridging and linking networks (Pope, 2006).

Bonding networks are the close networks involving families, friends and religious groups (Woolcock, 1998). Bridging and linking networks are those that create associational bonds across diverse networks (Woolcock, 1998). In the case of bridging networks, the ties are with other networks of different types of people, for example,

other clubs or religious groups, and for linking networks they are with social institutions (Woolcock, 1998).

3.11 VERIFYING THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

Steps to verify the accuracy and credibility of the research findings were taken at various stages of the research. Creswell (2003) argues validity does “not carry the same connotations as it does in quantitative research, nor is it a companion of reliability or generability” (p. 195). A number of qualitative researchers use the term ‘validity’ in a straightforward, common sense way to refer to the correctness or credibility of a description or conclusion; others use alternative terms that reflect the suggestion that the research findings are accurate from the viewpoint of the researcher, participants and readers of the research account. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) propose terms such as “credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability” (p. 25) to establish the trustworthiness of a piece of research, instead of (quantitative) terms such as internal validity, external validity, reliability and objectivity. These alternative terms are used in arguing for the trustworthiness of this research.

A number of theorists (Creswell, 2003, 2005, 2008; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Stake, 2008) provide strategies to ensure that qualitative research findings are accurate and credible. Creswell (2008) describes eight primary strategies, including:

1. triangulation;
2. member checking;
3. using rich, thick description to convey the findings;
4. clarifying the bias the researcher brings to the study;
5. presenting negative or discrepant information that runs counter to the themes; and
6. spending prolonged time in the field (p. 225).

Each of these strategies was utilised in this research. The additional two strategies of ‘peer debriefing’ and ‘use of an external auditor to review the project’ were deemed inappropriate for this research. In this section only triangulation and member checking are described, as the use of other strategies has been described previously. In Section 3.3, the plan to present findings, which were richly descriptive, was mooted. In sections 3.5 and 3.11.1, the biases brought to the research were raised

and discussed. Section 3.13 outlines the intention to present negative or discrepant information. The considerable time spent in the field has been noted in sections through this chapter.

Denzin and Lincoln (2005) describe four kinds of triangulation that contribute to verification and validation of qualitative analysis:

- checking the consistency of findings generated by different data collection methods (method triangulation);
- checking the consistency of different data sources within the same method (triangulation of sources);
- using multiple analysts to review findings (analyst triangulation); and
- using multiple perspectives or theories to interpret the data (theory triangulation) (p. 26).

Triangulation is a commonly used strategy in qualitative research to explain “more fully, the richness and complexity of human behaviour by studying it from more than one standpoint and/or using a variety of methods” (Burns, 2000, p. 419). In this research, triangulation of sources was achieved through comparing and cross-checking the consistency of information presented in student participant interview data, teacher focused interview data and parent/guardian questionnaire data.

Member checking was utilised to review summary findings in this research. Member checking is sometimes referred to as analytical triangulation, which is a way to “learn a lot about the accuracy, fairness and validity of the data analysis by getting participants’ reactions,” (Patton, 1990, p. 468). All student participants received a copy of their interview transcripts for checking. Stake (1995) discussed his use of member checking, acknowledging that typically he got “little back from the actor — not very satisfying but entirely necessary” (p. 16). This was also the experience in this research.

3.12 CONCLUSION

This chapter developed an argument to justify the methodological approach and the research methods employed in this study. The chapter described the processes whereby data were collected and analysed in order to interrogate research objectives that are central to this thesis. This chapter described the steps taken in exploring beliefs about post-secondary education from data collection through data analysis to the

generation of theory, and has outlined the reasons for selecting these methods. In so doing, it first presented an argument for the application of a qualitative approach. Second, it demonstrated the advantages of a combination of in-depth interviews and questionnaires as a research method. Finally, it addressed issues of quality in qualitative research and described the means employed to promote the credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability of the findings in this study.

Researchers are constantly urged to select a methodology that will best address the research purpose and question (Bazeley, 2007, p. 2). Generally speaking, qualitative methods are chosen in situations where a detailed understanding of a process is sought. In this study, in-depth interviews were the main research method. They were employed to “illuminate the perceptions, beliefs and lived experiences” (Bazeley, 2007, p. 19) of the participants as they constructed their career and study aspirations.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the results of the coding stages of the constructivist grounded theory analysis of the key data (Charmaz, 2006). It also presents a summary of the data collected through questionnaires with families and students. The data were collected and analysed in order to examine the study’s primary research question and the five key research objectives. The chapter is divided into two sections, focused on constructivist grounded theory data and questionnaire data.

4.2 CONSTRUCTIVIST GROUNDED THEORY

Constructivist grounded theory methodology demands “extensive amounts of rich data with thick description” (Charmaz, 2000, p. 514) which are coded and interpreted using a constant comparative approach. Seven individual interviews were recorded on a digital recorder with the permission of the interviewees. All of the interviews were transcribed in full by the researcher. After each interview was completed and transcribed, each line of the text was hand coded line-by-line, using an analytic process known as initial coding (Charmaz, 2006).

4.3 LINE-BY-LINE CODING

The line-by-line coding was initially recorded on the printed copies of the transcripts, refined and then transcribed into Microsoft Word documents using the Review feature in the software. The initial coding stage of analysis developed in a confused fashion at the start of the process. The researcher attempted to place aside theoretical positions, as much as possible while recognising the presence of prior ideas; however, considerable tension existed between these two competing points of view. The initial codes during this stage relied too heavily on prior anecdotal evidence rather than material coming from the transcripts. Codes utilised during this preliminary stage included ideas such as ‘sense of efficacy’, ‘power relationships’, ‘trust’ and ‘network structures’.

In light of Charmaz’s (2006) belief that initial codes “are provisional, comparative, and grounded in the data” (p. 48), the focus of this stage was changed. The initial codes were revised to become gerunds with active code names. A gerund is a noun formed from a verb, denoting an action. Examples of gerund-based initial codes are in Table 4.1. Coding actions and processes helped to capture what was happening in the transcripts rather than prematurely imposing an overarching theoretical structure or extant ideas on participant statements.

Table 4.1: Example of initial coding

Line-By-Line	Data
Identifies themselves with their school.	<i>I go to school at James Street College.</i>
Active participation with family.	<i>Umm ... well with my family I. With my brothers at home I just doing things like making up games, playing around.</i>
Achievement in pre-tertiary subjects pivotal.	<i>My pre-tertiary subjects such as English, Maths or Religion are important.</i>
More socially engaged at school.	<i>At home you get fairly busy, but at school you have time to be social.</i>

4.4 INITIAL CODING

The transcripts represented the coded participant interviews, as previously explained, from the six interviews conducted with the six student participants. The data from the initial participant interview transcript analysis were categorised into 39 different initial codes that highlighted participant opinions and attitudes towards school

participation and achievement. These constructed codes and their numerical frequency across the six participant interview transcripts are listed in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Interview transcripts: codes and frequencies

Code number	Code	Frequency
1	Identifies with own school	15
2	Identifies with pre-tertiary subjects being studied	19
3	Identifies with non-pre-tertiary subject and study line	3
4	Focuses future direction on going to university	26
5	Present educational self actively defines actions to achieve in school subjects for future academic and career prospects	31
6	Present educational self passively engages in school subjects to achieve for future academic and career prospects	24
7	Educational self assiduous in participation and application in school subjects	73
8	Educational self casual in participation and application in the subject of English	31
9	Attitudes towards teachers	40
10	Parental attitude towards education	59
11	Family social interaction	62
12	Parents influence on student agency (micro)	68
13	Sibling influence on student agency — general	22
14	Parental influence on student agency — education	75
15	Family influence on student agency (macro)	28
16	Involvement in sport	42
17	Involved in team-based sports	11
18	Involved in individual-based sport	4
19	Sport influenced student agency	32
20	Plays sport for the College	9
21	Family-based sport activities	23
22	Religious identity	72
23	Student values (actions)	56
24	Student values (beliefs)	40
25	Family religious identity	67
26	Friendship	67
27	Participation and engagement with people with similar religious belief	19
28	Technology and social networking important	5
29	Physically meeting up with friends	16
30	Having a social life important	33
31	Peer group advice	39
32	Friends	76
33	Sport	30
34	Present educational self	56
35	Future educational self	37
36	Student reflexivity — general	44
37	Student reflexivity — school achievement	62
38	Teacher influence on student reflexivity	46
39	Parental influence on student reflexivity	57
	Total	1519

4.5 AXIAL CODES AND CATEGORIES

After the initial coding, the research data was re-read and similarities regarding the conditions, context and discursive features of each initial code were identified. Initial codes that shared similarities in conditions, contexts and discursive features were collapsed into categories and then written up with an explanation of each category in terms of discursive similarities. The 39 initial codes identified within the student data were collapsed into ten categories, as shown in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3 Axial coding and categories

Category number	Category	Initial codes	Subtotals	Total
1	Focused on future educational and career outcomes	1	15	326
		2	19	
		3	3	
		4	26	
		5	31	
		7	37	
		35	73	
2	Unfocused application of educational self	37	84	130
		8	31	
		36	44	
		6	24	
3	Teacher influence on student participation and achievement	34	56	80
		9	40	
4	Family social interaction	38	46	174
		11	62	
		12	68	
		13	22	
5	Parental influence on student action	15	28	191
		14	75	
		10	59	
		39	57	
6	Religious values and beliefs	22	72	129
		25	67	
		27	19	
7	Important to have a social life	28	5	40
		29	16	
		30	33	
8	Peer influence on student values and application at school	31	39	177
		32	76	
		26	67	
9	Influence of participation in sport on student	16	42	151
		17	11	
		18	4	
		19	32	
		20	20	
		21	23	
10	Student reflexivity on values	33	30	96
		23	56	
		24	40	

4.5.1 Category 1 — focused on future educational and career outcomes.

Category 1 was formed by collapsing codes 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 25, 35 and 37. Codes used in Category 1 were focused on discursive strategies that identified present student educational application was based on perceived prerequisite for future educational and career opportunities. The codes shared conditions where student dialogue identified reasons for current application at school such as school choice, subject selection, personal application to the subject material, creating educational and career content links for future aspirations. Examples of this category include:

- *[I'll] probably go to University in Tasmania for the first year. Just to get used to going to uni and living away from my family.*
- *Get enough points to make sure I have enough different career paths for the future.*
- *Umm...just basically in this year I focused on the subjects which I can count to go towards uni.*
- *For example like prerequisites for university.*
- *Biology is a prerequisite for going into nursing which is a second option for me.*
- *I go to school at Caritas College.*
- *I always get my work done on time. Make sure I am up to date with the questions for a book etc. And through that I have got fairly good marks.*
- *Just making sure all things are passed in on time. All the questions are finished.*
- *I have been given some really good marks so far in English but I worked hard for them.*
- *Take it all in. I realise that if I do this then it will all come together at the end of the year in the exam. So [you] really do need to make sure you appreciate all these factors.*
- *Rather than just doing the basics, I really worked hard. I really enjoyed it last year.*
- *Rather than in previous years, I actually worked really hard to make sure I got good marks rather than just average.*
- *I don't like being told what to do in class.*
- *They just taught us about stupid stuff like writing sentences which [is] primary school stuff.*
- *I just thought this was stupid and got really bored.*

- *I like being taught but I don't like a teacher just droning on about the subject material.*
- *In those years I just did what I had to do rather than anything else.*
- *I don't really like just sitting in class and listening to the teacher read the book or do simple stuff.*

4.5.2 Category 2 — unfocused application of educational self

Category 2 — unfocused application of educational self — was formed by collapsing codes 6 and 34. Both codes used discursive strategies that identified general student application in the school environment that was unfocused in nature. The codes shared conditions where student dialogue identified distracted or insolent student behaviour such as provoking conflict with peers or a teacher, not following direct teacher instruction or failing to undertake required work in the school setting. Examples of this category include:

- *Sometimes in my younger years I just want to shit teachers off.*
- *I see teachers as humans not someone who should always be followed.*
- *Some teachers try to stand out the front of the classroom and control everything which is really stupid.*
- *I don't really respect teachers.*
- *A negative effect would be when I talk too much or do not take notice too much.*
- *I don't like being told what to do in class.*
- *They just taught as about stupid stuff like writing sentences which [is] primary school stuff.*
- *I just thought this was stupid and got really bored.*
- *I like being taught but I don't like a teacher just droning on about the subject material.*
- *In those years I just did what I had to do rather than anything else.*
- *I don't really like just sitting in class and listening to the teacher read the book or do simple stuff.*

4.5.3 Category 3 — teacher influence on student participation and achievement

Category 3 — teacher influence on student participation and achievement — was formed by collapsing codes 9 and 38. Both codes used discursive strategies that identified the influences teachers have on students' ability to participate and achieve in the broad school environment. The codes shared conditions where student dialogue

identified specific teacher behaviour which had either a positive or negative influence though elements such as providing motivation, being aware of their subject content, not responding in a timely manner to student assignment work and being socially distant in the classroom. Examples of this category include:

- *The teacher really influences the way you engage with the material.*
- *Like, if they treat you as a person, then you are more willing to engage with the work then.*
- *But if I feel uneven marking has happened then I would say something to the teacher.*
- *He said I was a hard worker but was having trouble grasping the some of the ideas quickly.*
- *In grade nine we had Mr A and he wasn't really into his subjects.*

4.5.4 Category 4 — family social interaction

Category 4 — family social interaction — was formed through collapsing codes 11, 12, 13 and 15. The codes shared conditions where students identified physical, emotional or psychological interactions such as seeking general guidance on an issue, expressions of dominant family social values, working together on a project and spending time together in a specific setting. Examples of this category include:

- *I have always tried to do my best due to my family's influence.*
- *I spend a lot of time with my twin sisters.*
- *It seemed like we spent a lot of time together around the house doing stuff like watching TV, feeding the horses or doing farm work.*
- *In my family ... it is important that animals are not treated badly.*
- *Our family has always been anti-racism.*
- *My grandparents were good. They really took an interest.*

4.5.5 Category 5 — parental influence on student actions

Category 5 — parental influence on student actions — was formed through collapsing codes 10, 14 and 39. The collapsed codes shared discursive strategies, which identified the interplay between parental values and expectations on student actions. The codes shared conditions that identified overt and subtle parental influence on student action such as selecting certain subjects for them to study, helping them with

homework, placing importance upon further education after year 12 and encouragement to achieve in a variety of subjects. Examples of this category include:

- *They have always emphasised the fact that I need to go to uni since the day I was born.*
- *Mum encourages me to do my homework but she knows I will do it anyway.*
- *They have always encouraged me to do Maths, English and Science.*
- *They have both stressed from the very start that it is important to go well at school.*
- *They think you should have a good foundation to help establish yourself in life.*

4.5.6 Category 6 — religious values and beliefs

Category 6 — religious values and beliefs — was formed through collapsing codes 22, 25 and 27. Religious values and beliefs were used as discursive strategies referring to personal, family, peer and school moral points of view. The codes shared conditions which identified general Christian or Catholic moral values and beliefs such as identifying themselves as a particular Christian denomination, placing importance upon holding specific religious beliefs and attending church on a regular basis. Examples of this category include:

- *I choose to accept being a Catholic which means I follow its teachings about issues.*
- *I have been brought up in a family which values certain things.*
- *I go to church fairly often. It does depend who is home but I go to church.*
- *Like social justice.*
- *I suppose I have an underpinning Christian values [sic].*

4.5.7 Category 7 — important to have a social life

Category 7 — important to have a social life — was formed through collapsing codes 28, 29 and 30. The discursive strategies identified the importance of having a social life, which is independent from the demands placed on them from the school environment. The codes shared conditions, which identified activities, which were undertaken for personal enjoyment such as playing sport, going to the cinema, watching television and going to social events. Examples of this category include:

- *Or just playing around with my brothers. So those kinds of things I value as being a young person.*
- *We go to the beach a lot. The movies a bit.*
- *I go along to a third weekend bushwalk with Mum and Dad.*
- *And I value having fun.*
- *I spend time with my family, friends and my dog.*

4.5.8 Category 8 — peer influence on student values and application at school

Category 8 — peer influence on student values and application at school — was formed through collapsing codes 31, 32 and 26. The discursive strategies identified links between personal opinions, actions and values with perceived expectations of fellow peers inside and outside the school. The codes shared conditions, which explored factors contributing to the socialising of student values and beliefs through peer association. Examples of this category include:

- *My friends also influence my personal values.*
- *They influence my choices. Peer group pressure is really strong at school.*
- *Umm ... my friends probably. I guess like the way my friends act.*
- *They influence me differently, when compared to my family.*
- *My friends. They will say it is a good idea or not.*

4.5.9 Category 9 — influence of participation in sport on student

Category 9 — influence of participation in sport on student — was formed through collapsing codes 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21 and 33. The collapsed codes shared discursive strategies that identified participating in individual or collective sport as being a significant activity for the student. The codes shared conditions, which demonstrated an importance of participating in a sport for the school, club or hobby. Examples of this category include:

- *I do Latin and ballroom dancing twice a week.*
- *I want to keep riding my horses and stuff like that.*
- *On the weekend I do a lot of sporting activities.*
- *I am also trying training with various club teams at the moment.*
- *It is a physically demanding sport but it also important to be mentally strong.*

4.5.10 Category 10 — student reflexivity on values

Category 10 — student reflexivity on values — was created through collapsing codes 23 and 24. Both codes used discursive strategies that identified student reflexivity on personal behavioural and psychological attributes. Student reflexivity with regard to a wide range of personal values and beliefs were identified in the discursive strategies used in the codes collapsed to constitute this category. Examples of this category include:

- *Umm ... just basically in this year I focused on the subjects which I can count to go towards uni.*
- *So you have to do well while you are here to make sure that you can set yourself up for life.*
- *I will take a gap year first.*
- *I would like to go to uni on the mainland, preferably in Melbourne or Sydney.*
- *I thought about becoming a vet but that would be a stupid thing to do because I get too sensitive around animals when they get hurt or sick. So it would not be the right thing for me.*

4.6 THEME CODING

The next stage of the analysis was to establish relations between categories and concepts, and integrate the categories into a theoretical framework that specified causes, conditions and consequences of the processes (Charmaz & Mitchell, 2001, pp. 1-3). The categories that shared similar causes, conditions and consequences are collapsed into themes. This further iterative process generated the themes from the data and the results of the initial and focused coding. Using this process, the axial coding stage resulted in six themes.

The themes mirrored the persistent ideas in the data, and identified overlap between the participants in terms of the overarching patterns. Table 4.4 identifies the categories that establish these themes, and consolidates the outcomes of the initial and focused coding to present and engage with a synthesised, data-inclusive and grounded analysis. From this section onwards, the key data results will be analysed together, since the coding levels effectively brought the material together to enable a profound interrogation of combined issues, patterns, themes and concepts.

The themes are reviewed in depth in Chapter 5; the elements identified in this chapter are an indicator of the patterns, parameters and ideas that constitute them.

Table 4.4 Themes

Theme	Axial category number	Axial category
Future self	1	Focused on future educational and career outcomes
Unfocused	2	Unfocused application of educational self
Teacher influence	3	Teacher influence on student participation and achievement
Family	4	Family social interaction
	5	Parental influence on student action
Student social values	6	Religious values and beliefs
	10	Student reflexivity on values
Peer involvement	7	Important to have a social life
	8	Peer influence on student values and application at school
	9	Influence of participation in sport on student

4.6.1 Theme of future self

The theme of future self consists of only one category — focused on future educational and career outcomes. This theme privileges implicit and explicit strategies and techniques that propagate orthodoxy in terms of expected student behaviour, attitude and beliefs associated with an academically engaged student. Specific practices identified by the students were having high expectations, being engaged in the subject material, sharing ideas, asking questions, getting work in on time, being respectful and being prepared to work.

Kate believes that to be a good student in the English classroom, “you need to make sure all the small and big things are done properly”. She contends a lot of students come to class totally unprepared for what is required of them:

In year 10 we were grouped into common core classes. This was a pretty terrible idea. A few people come to class without their workbooks, pens and a good attitude. Some kids just wanted to hijack the class every period of English.

Ben believes people need to take responsibility for their behaviour and expectations in the classroom. He believes that taking personal responsibility for his learning shows specific educational values such as, “always showing respect to the teacher, coming to prepared to work rather than have talk with friends and having high expectations of myself”. Ben believes that while he and his friends hold these values, a minority of people in classroom are concerned with trivial matters:

One bloke in class is more worried about arguing the point with the teacher rather than doing his work. He always comes to class unprepared, wants to borrow other people’s equipment and then wastes time arguing pointless bits of information.

Emma self-identifies as a high-achieving student who believes that to be successful at school requires you to undertake some basic steps in the classroom: “you need to listen, ask questions and then get onto finishing what is required of you”.

4.6.2 Theme of unfocused

The theme of unfocused consists of only one category — unfocused application of educational self. This theme explores student dialogue that identified negative and challenging language in the context of their engagement with school, specific subjects, teachers and peers.

Jay acknowledges he is an individual who has an indifferent sense of agency towards a variety of aspects of college life. Jay in the past has opted to act “stupid in the classroom and fired up about things and then people get shitty” to achieve the aim of not having to undertake specific tasks or assessments. In the subject of English he generally goes “ok, because I like to read a fair bit” but contends that a variety of different issues come into play with regard to participation and achievement:

In classroom sometimes, you need to show the teacher and class your true identity. At this school, people have so many different faces. Some teachers show a nice side when they think someone is looking but then become pricks when alone in [the] classroom. I think it is important to show your personality wherever you are.

Some participants highlighted the importance of holding counter-institutional and peer group opinions. Emma states that while you should always be polite and courteous, if someone is saying something contentious then “you have every right to tell them [sic] they are wrong or misguided”. According to Emma, a teacher once tried to brush aside some concerns about the treatment of animals at a local rodeo but she felt compelled to speak up:

I feel really strongly about animal rights. This teacher didn't think it was important. I told him and class about how a cow had its back two legs broken and then spent the next fifteen minutes limping around before anyone did anything. It made me feel sick.

After this event, Emma felt the class had a good discussion about animal rights. Resistance is a potential site for change and transformation and, “the means through which individuals change social processes and structures and build alternatives” (Sage, 2007, p. 2).

4.6.3 Theme of teacher influence

The theme of teacher influence consists of only one category — teacher influence on student participation and achievement. This theme identifies the factors of establishing positive student-teacher relationships, understanding of subject knowledge, assessment feedback and providing motivation for students to participate and achieve at school. The evidence-base on the impact of teachers, and that the quality of the relationships between students and teachers is crucial to achieving optimal educational outcomes for all students, is consistently demonstrated throughout a variety of educational research (Bernard, Zhang, Abrami, Sicol, Borokhovski & Surkes, 2008; Martin, 2001, 2003; Martin, Mullis & Foy, 2008; Nelson, 2002).

Most of the participants spoke of the support provided by their teachers, which enabled their participation in education. Forms of support include developing positive teacher/student relationships as well as teachers having high expectations that students would excel. One participant spoke intensely about how her “teachers really influence me” and how she enjoyed attending class due to the fact her “teachers kind of inspire me”. This participant spoke about the close student/teacher relationship she had with her homeroom teacher:

I mean even this year ... I had to choose which English subject I would do and I asked people ... and my homeroom teacher told me to do English Communications rather than English Studies or English Writing which might not play to strengths.

She states that student/teacher relationships were important for regional students:

Yeah, having a good relationship, like you have got relationships in your house and when you're not at home, when you go to school, it's a different place. And with the teacher making relationships, like forming relations with the students, it makes them feel that they are at home as well.

Furthermore, she considered supportive teachers were instrumental in her continued participation in subject of English through "teachers support and praise from teachers. Just the way the teachers teach you in the school ... makes you want to know".

A majority of the participants reported consistent attendance and participation in the English classroom that was linked to their enjoyment of the subject. A small number of participants achieved only average attendance during secondary education due to issues such as family illness, family trauma and a general lack of engagement with school. On being asked whether she regularly attended secondary English class, Phoebe stated that she liked her teacher and the way he presented material in a "fun and cheerful way, but always firm" manner. She felt she had a good teacher/student relationship and felt she would "learn stuff" in her current teacher's class.

Lauren attended her English class regularly and was only absent when she was ill. Her present teacher had an interesting way of presenting material even "if it is boring" in nature. On one occasion she did "wag" English class but felt it really did not achieve much at all. "I wanted to spend some extra time with the girls at the busy bee but my teacher always checks reasons for absences which really freaked me out".

The learning environment established in the English classroom influences participation and achievement. The adage that when the learning environment is right, students are inspired to do their best underpins this idea. Ben states, "you really want a teacher who knows their stuff and not someone who doesn't have a clue about their subject". The sense of trusting the ability of their teacher resonated with other participants. "Mrs Glover was fun teacher to have for English last year but she didn't have a lot of control and made some pretty big mistakes in class", said Phoebe about

her previous teacher. Jay identified a teacher who only had a basic understanding of the subject content. “I had teacher last year for English who was completely hopeless. We watched lots of movies, a few hand out sheets and lots of work from the book. He didn’t explain anything and got angry if you asked for help”.

Conversely, “Mr Saunders is a great teacher because he gives useful comments and reasons for receiving a particular grade”, said Lauren. Most participants identified the importance of receiving timely, considered and helpful feedback on their assessment pieces. Teacher and student conferencing after the return of assessment work provides a unique opportunity to decipher comments and plan new strategies to get back on track. Ben identified a recent teacher conference with his current English teacher:

I was a bit upset with a mark received I received in English Communications. The notes on the assignment didn’t make any sense. After speaking to Mr Farmer, I realised he was trying to get me to be more analytical rather than saying I was stupid.

4.6.4 Theme of family

The theme of family is created through collapsing Category 6, family social interaction and Category 7, parental influence on student actions. This theme examines overt and subtle discursive events of participants with parents, guardians and siblings to seek an understanding of their influence upon educational participation and achievement. Identified areas of interest include elements such as family values, emotional support and guidance.

A majority of participants came from home situations that were financially and emotionally stable. A number of participants experienced a non-transient lifestyle with most living with their immediate families in the town of Torquay, where they had lived for the duration of their childhood and teenage years. This settled home life resulted in most participants attending one primary and one secondary school.

Most of the participants' parents remained together in long-term relationships and were employed, working in the home or engaged in tertiary studies. According to Lauren, both her parents have “really encouraged education” and identified it “as an important thing” to focus on. Ben spoke of his parents having both completed university

degrees, but his mother is a “big influence”, as she is specifically concerned about his performance in English but “also all my other subjects”. Kate’s parents believe it is “important to have a good education”. Her parents have fostered a belief that good education provides a “foundation to help establish yourself in life. Jay believes his mother thinks school is important. He believes his mother wanted to go to, “uni but ended up having me instead”. Claire identifies that her parents would be “number one in determining my attitude towards education”. Claire says that her family play a dominant role in the personal and school based choices:

If I have a problem at home or school then I would usually talk with my family about how they would deal with it. They give advice about how they would deal with it. My family have pretty much helped me make all my subject choices this year.

Kate reflects similar active parental involvement in school decisions. Kate states her parents “appreciate she is academically capable” and they really instilled that “belief in me”. Her parents have actively participated in her selection of specific subjects this year:

They have chosen subjects which will be good for me in the long run. I chose Maths Methods because they encouraged it and would be able to help me.

4.6.5 Theme of student social values

The theme of student social values was created through the collapsing Category 8, religious values and beliefs and Category 12, student reflexivity on values. The theme of student social values identifies orthodox sectarian and emerging attitudes towards personal agency while at school. Participants in the study identified an understanding of spirituality, seeing it as a way to get to know oneself, provide guidelines on how to treat others, handle relationships and understand the existence of any transcendental force. Students shared a view that there are both conscious and subconscious spiritual elements influencing agency.

A number of students identified as coming from a religious background. Ben identified early in the interview he had “been brought up in a strong Catholic family”. His sense of spirituality was closely tied to the teaching and doctrines of the Catholic Church:

I am involved with the Catholic Church fairly regularly. The teachings of the Church have been backed up inside of me. Beliefs like social justice.

Claire identifies as being from a traditional Catholic background. She attends church “fairly often” and holds “underpinning Christian values”. Claire contends it is important to identify and live out your Christian values:

You have to stand up for your values. You shouldn't allow people to walk all over you. I choose to accept being Catholic which means I follow its teachings about issues.

A pattern that emerged in the data was the distinction between church values and spirituality being made by a number of the participants. Traditional entry points established by the school that assisted students on their spiritual journey of parish, family and religious instruction at school are being replaced by concepts around the environment, social justice and a broader network of relationships. Phoebe reflects this new sense of spirituality:

I believe the whole of life is a spiritual experience. I try to do the right thing most of the time. Spirituality for me is about finding a sense of enlightenment and happiness within you. I believe that I make a conscious effort every day to be true and spiritual.

4.6.6 Theme of peer involvement

The theme of peer involvement was created through collapsing Category 9, important to have a social life, Category 10, peer influence on student values and application at school and Category 11, influence of participation in sport on student. The theme of peer involvement was both an enabler and inhibitor for student engagement in the classroom. Claire regularly identified her secondary school as a site of activity: “I guess friends. I've got lots of memories”. Her friends at the secondary school have played a role in her continued success in her studies:

I also value having decent friends, who you can trust and who you can rely onto help in class. They are putting in the effort now, so they can have a great future.

Lauren talked about her experiences in secondary English classroom in terms of providing the opportunity to socialise with friends who made her “more confident in speaking on the material being discussed because they will back me up or give support”.

Lauren placed considerable emphasis on the need to have a social diversity among the friends with whom who you sit during class:

In a group you need to have diversity. I think you would get sick of people if they were all the same. People have all different strengths. Some are funny and some are good at schoolwork.

In spite of experiencing difficulties at school, Jay cited friends as an example of what he considered were the best aspects of school. He did not particularly like secondary school but enjoyed meeting his friends and socialising with them. In contrast, Kate spoke of the motivation for attending English was to see her friends, do her homework and complete assignments. Kate stated that the group of friends “see and act upon things differently, compared to the rest of the English class and grade level”.

Ben knew many people in the secondary school but did not really worry too much about peer involvement in the classroom setting. Ben argued his involvement in the state team for football and basketball meant he “needed to use his time in class effectively and be organised” rather than being too sociable in class. His extensive sporting commitments had created in him a confident, independent learner who believed “you had to do well while you are here to make sure that you can set yourself up for life”.

4.7 QUESTIONNAIRE

This section presents a summary of the data collected through questionnaires with families and students. The questionnaires used in the research were designed to obtain information about a range of social capital aspects. Frequency counts of responses to items on a Likert scale produced a range of scores for the five sub-scale factors. Summative totals were generated for all participants on the sub-scale factors, as well as a total social capital score. This information provides a useful point of comparison with the findings from analysis of interview data. Findings from the questionnaire phase of the research are discussed in the following sections.

4.8 FAMILY QUESTIONNAIRE

An invitation to families to participate in the research resulted in six completed questionnaires for analysis. The family questionnaire had two sections incorporating a

total of 37 questions. Section A consisted of 11 forced choice items and three open-ended items. Section B consisted of 22 Likert scale items.

4.8.1 Section A — demographic

Table 4.5 provides a summary of demographic and background information of families. Five females and one male completed the family social capital questionnaire. The age of participants ranged between 44 and 57 years with an average of 53 years. All were employed, working an average of 40 hours per week.

Family home postcode was important to ensure that participants were located in the geographical region of the Northwest Coast of Tasmania. Four families in the research had a home postcode location based around the city of Torquay. Two families had a postcode in the neighbouring municipality; however, they were still located in the broad geographic area of the Northwest Coast of Tasmania.

The data revealed some uniformity across the families. Family composition for all respondents was with a partner and children. Families only spoke English at home. None of the families identified themselves as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. The place of residence for all families was a private house, unit or flat that they were buying.

Table 4.5 shows four families identified their main source of income for the household as being wages or salary. Two families identified their income as coming from other sources, while no families identified as receiving pension or benefit. The income level of families was grouped evenly among three levels. Two families identified themselves in the income level of \$40 000 - \$59 999 per year. Two families acknowledged their income level as \$60 000 - \$79 999 per year. Two families identified with an income level greater than \$100 000 a year.

In order to understand the educational context of families, respondents were asked to identify their qualifications. The most common level of education by participants was a TAFE certificate or diploma. One family identified their educational level as being year 10 or equivalent. Two families acknowledged an educational level of degree or postgraduate.

4.8.2 Section B — social capital information

The questions used in Section B of the questionnaire were modified from research undertaken by Onyx and Bullen (1998, 2000a, 2000b). This series of studies utilised a questionnaire consisting of eight sub-scales to measure social capital (Table 4.6). Factor analysis was used to identify the eight social capital factors. The meaning of each factor is inferred from its title and associated description.

Table 4.5 Parental demographic information

Category	Data
Gender	
Female	5
Male	1
Employment	
Yes	6
No	0
Total hours worked per week	40 hours per week
Age	
Average age	53 years
Postcode	
All located in the Northwest postcodes	
Place of residence	
Private house, flat or unit	6
Public housing	0
Other	0
Buying	6
Renting	0
Average time spent living in local area	24.2 years
Living arrangement	
Alone	0
Partner	0
Children	0
Partner and children	6 (100%)
Extended or blended family	0
Friends	0
Other	0
Children 18 years of age or under	
Yes. If yes, how many under school age	0
How many school age to 18	2.3
Language spoken at home	
English	6
Other	0
Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	
Yes	0
No	6
Main source of income	
Wages or salary	4
Pension or benefits	0
Other	2
Current income level	
Less than \$10,000	0
\$10,001 to \$19,999	0

Category	Data
\$20,000 to \$39,999	0
\$ 40,000 to \$59,999	2 (33.33%)
\$ 60,000 to \$79,999	2 (33.33%)
\$ 80,000 to \$99,999	0
\$ 100,000 +	2 (33.34%)
Qualifications	
Year ten or equivalent	1
Year twelve or equivalent	0
TAFE Certificate or Diploma (or equivalent)	3
Degree or Post Graduate	2

Table 4.6 Eight social capital sub-scales

Factor	Title	Description
Factor A	Participation in the local community	Participation in formal community structures (e.g. "are you an active member of a local organisation?").
Factor B	Social agency	A sense of personal and collective efficacy, or personal agency in a social context. Agency refers to the capacity of the individual to plan and initiate action (e.g. "If you need information to make a life decision, do you know where to find that information?").
Factor C	Feelings of trust and safety	Defined by items such as "do you agree that most people can be trusted?"
Factor D	Neighbourhood connections	Concerned with more informal interaction within the local area (e.g. "Have you visited a neighbour in the past week?")
Factor E	Family and friends connection	Defined by items such as "in the past week how many phone conversations have you had with friends?"
Factor F	Tolerance and diversity	Defined by such items as "do you think multiculturalism makes life better?"
Factor G	Value of life	Defined by items such as "do you feel valued by society?"
Factor H	Work connection	Defined by items such as "are your workmates also your friends?"

The questionnaire used in this research included five factors from the Onyx and Bullen studies (1998, 2000a, 2000b). The reduction in the number of social capital factors used in this study's questionnaire was driven by concerns regarding the length of time required by families to undertake the process. Factor F: tolerance and diversity was deleted as it connected with concepts identified in Factor D: neighbourhood connections. Factor G: value for life was also deleted, as it shared a number of

overlapping characteristics with Factor B: social agency. Factor H: work connection was deleted due to its optional nature in the original questionnaire scale (Onyx and Bullen, 1998, 2000).

A frequency count of the Likert scale items was the first step in analysing the questionnaire data. The 22 Likert scale items in the family questionnaire were coded on a 1–5 basis, where 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = undecided, 4 = agree and 5 = strongly agree. Table 4.7 identifies the counts for the coded responses for the five social capital factors. The frequency count highlighted a pattern of similar family responses across the five social capital factors.

Table 4.7 Family Likert scale frequency count

Social capital factors	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
Factor A: Participation in the local community	0	0	4	14	6
Factor B: Social agency	0	0	6	10	8
Factor C: Feelings of trust and safety	0	6	2	25	12
Factor D: Neighbourhood connections	0	1	4	11	8
Factor E: Family and friends connection	0	1	0	9	8
Total	0	8	16	69	42

Families rated a number of questions (10 out of 22) in a similar way. There were no significant differences among families for these ten items (Table 4.8). Two questions did obtain differences in perceptions among families (Table 4.9). The negative perception of some societal institutions reflects attitudes contained in the interview data but its significance is discussed in the next chapter.

Table 4.8 Similar perceptions among families

Item no.	Questionnaire text
17	I believe that by helping others you help yourself in the long run.
18	I believe that members of a community should volunteer to help local groups.
19	I feel safe living in my neighbourhood.
20	I believe that most people can be trusted.
21	I believe that if someone's car breaks down outside my house, I should invite them into my home to use the phone.
27	I believe it is important to maintain regular weekly contact with family members, who do not live with me.
28	If I have a sick neighbour I would do a favour to help them.
30	I feel parents and children must stay together, as much as possible.
31	I can attain my personal goals by working for my community's goals.
36	I trust the school my child attends.
37	I believe it is important to achieve in all academic subjects at school.

Table 4.9 Different perceptions among families

Item no.	Questionnaire text
34	I trust the state parliament.
35	I trust the legal system.

Table 4.10 presents total social capital scores for the families. The table identifies the number of questions constituting the social capital factor and highest possible score. Cronbach's alpha coefficients were used to check the internal consistency of items for each sub-scale, measuring the extent to which item responses correlate with each other. An alpha of 0.5 is acceptable but 0.7 or above is recommended. Table 4.10 shows the alpha coefficients for each sub-scale, with the lowest alpha in Factor E: family and friends (0.41). The highest alpha was for Factor B: social agency (0.80). The alpha for the 22 question items in the questionnaire was 0.75.

Table 4.10 Social capital scores for families (F = Family)

Social capital domain	Reliability (Cronach's α)	F 1	F 2	F 3	F 4	F 5	F 6
Factor A: Participation in the local community (4 questions, 20 highest score)	0.60	15	19	17	14	17	16
Factor B: Social agency (4 questions, 20 highest score)	0.80	15	19	17	12	16	17
Factor C: Feelings of trust and safety (7 questions, 35 highest score)	0.78	24	30	26	29	32	31
Factor D: Neighbourhood connections (4 questions, 20 highest score)	0.76	19	19	16	13	15	16
Factor E: Family and friends connection (3 questions, 15 highest score)	0.41	13	14	12	14	14	10
Total social capital score (22 questions, 110 highest score)	0.75	86	101	88	82	94	90

There are differences among families with respect to both the patterns of social capital factors and total capital scores. Families 2 and 5 have higher total social capital scores. Both families have noticeably higher levels of feelings of trust and safety. Family 2 has significantly elevated scores on the remaining social capital factors. In general family total scores are reflective of Onyx and Bullen's findings (1998, 2000a, 2000b) that regional areas tended to have higher levels of social capital.

4.9 STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Six students completed questionnaires, which were based on the modified Onyx and Bullen (1998, 2000a, 2000b) social capital scale. Small modifications in the wording of questions were made to increase their relevance to students. (One question was deleted from Factor D, *neighbourhood connections*, as it was deemed unsuitable). The questionnaire was in one section and incorporated 21 Likert scale items.

Frequency counts of the Likert scale items in the student questionnaire are shown in Table 4.11. A pattern of student agreement with the scale items was present (98, 78%) in the count. Student responses to a number of questions (8 out of 21) were

very similar (Table 4.11). The count identified a minority of responses that disagreed with the questions (11 responses, 9%). Four questions from the scale did draw out differences amongst the students (Table 4.12).

Patterns in student data paralleled the family frequency count. Family frequency count contained high levels of agreement (111, 82%) and low levels of disagreement (8, 6%) with scale items. Questions highlighting similarities and differences in student responses closely reflected those identified for families (Table 4.12 and Table 4.13).

Table 4.11 Student frequency count

Social capital factors	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
Factor A: Participation in the local community	0	2	2	15	5
Factor B: Social agency	0	3	4	16	7
Factor C: Feelings of trust and safety	0	5	6	25	6
Factor D: Neighbourhood connections	0	0	2	5	5
Factor E: Family and friends connection	0	1	3	5	9
Total	0	11	17	66	32

Table 4.12 Similar perceptions between students

Item no.	Questionnaire text
2	I believe that by helping others you help yourself in the long run.
8	If I were caring for a child and needed to go out for a while, I would ask a neighbour for help.
9	I feel it is important to support local community events (e.g., school concert, craft exhibition).
10	I believe it is important to be an active member of a local organisation or club (e.g., sport, craft, social club).
11	I believe that my local community located on the Northwest Coast of Tasmania feels like home.
13	I believe it is important to maintain regular weekly contact with family members, who do not live with me.
20	I trust the school I attend.
21	I believe it is important to achieve in all academic subjects at school.

Table 4.13 Different perceptions between students

Item no.	Questionnaire text
7	I believe that if someone's car breaks down outside my house, I should invite them into my home to use the phone
16	I respect the majority's wishes in groups of which I am a member
17	I trust the local council
18	I trust the state parliament

Table 4.14 identifies students' scores on five sub-scale factors as well as total social capital scores. The alpha for the 21 question items in the questionnaire was 0.62. The range for the total social capital was 16 points. It was apparent each student had a distinct profile in Table 4.14. Student 2 had the highest total social capital score. Student 2 scored highly on all social capital factors. Student 3 recorded the lowest total social capital score, and also received significantly lower scores on Factor A: participation and Factor C: feelings of trust and safety.

Table 4.14 Student scores on the five social capital sub-scores (S = Student)

Social capital domain	Reliability (Cronbach's α)	S 1	S 2	S 3	S 4	S 5	S 6
Factor A: Participation in the local community (4 questions, 20 highest score)	0.72	17	17	16	11	18	16
Factor B: Social agency (4 questions, 20 highest score)	0.83	16	18	13	18	15	18
Factor C: Feelings of trust and safety (7 questions, 35 highest score)	0.60	28	29	26	22	24	29
Factor D: Neighbourhood connections (4 questions, 15 highest score)	0.41	11	13	13	13	14	13
Factor E: Family and friends connection (3 questions, 15 highest score)	0.65	11	15	13	12	15	10
Total social capital score (21 questions, 105 highest score)	0.61	83	92	81	76	86	86

A number of patterns were evident in Table 4.14. In general across the social capital factors, students scored at a similar level with a few individual differences. Factor C: feelings of trust and safety varied amongst student scores. In contrast, Factor D: neighbourhood connections had a significant level of uniformity in scores across students.

Qualitative data analysis involved various types of statistical analysis. The Likert data from the questionnaires were first organised and analysed using Microsoft Excel (Version 2007). Independent t-tests were conducted on the scale questionnaire items to investigate whether statistical differences existed between family and student groups. The level of significance was set at 0.05. If the observed p value was 0.05 or less, the result was considered statistically significant, otherwise if it was more than 0.05, the test was considered non-significant. An initial comparison of the two sets of data showed that family average ratings ($M = 4.10$, $SD = 0.77$) were slightly higher than students ($M = 4.00$, $SD = 0.81$) but the difference was not statistically significant (two-tailed $t(249) = 1.03$, $p = 0.30$).

Family and student questionnaire item numbers were analysed using an independent t-test. The level of significance was set at 0.05. On a majority of questions (19 out of 23 questions) families and students rated questions in a similar way. That is, there were no statistically significant differences between the two groups on these seventeen items (see Table 4.15). Interestingly, item numbers which constituted Factor A: participation in the local community, Factor B: social agency and Factor E: family and friends connections showed no statistical differences between family and student data sets. These findings are explored in further detail in the next chapter.

Table 4.15 Similar perceptions between families and students

Item no.	Questionnaire text
15	I feel valued by my local community.
16	I believe people need to take greater responsibility for the local physical environment.
17	I believe that by helping others you help yourself in the long run.
18	I believe that members of a community should volunteer to help local groups.
19	I feel safe living in my neighbourhood.
21	I believe that if someone's car breaks down outside my house, I should invite them into my home to use the phone.
22	If I were caring for a child and needed to go out for a while, I would ask a neighbour for help.
23	I feel it is important to support local community events (e.g., church fete, school concert, craft exhibition).
24	I believe it is important to be an active member of a local organisation or club (e.g., sport, craft, social club).
26	I believe it is important to maintain regular weekly contact with close friends.
27	I believe it is important to maintain regular weekly contact with family members, who do not live with me.
28	If I have a sick neighbour I would do a favour to help them.
29	I believe it is important to be involved in the management committee for local groups or organisations.
30	I feel parents and children must stay together, as much as possible.
31	I can attain my personal goals by working for my community's goals.
32	I respect the majority's wishes in groups of which I am a member.
34	I trust the state parliament.
36	I trust the school my child attends.
37	I believe it is important to achieve in all academic subjects at school.

4.10 COMPARISON BETWEEN FAMILY AND STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRES

There were four statistically significant differences identified between family and student questionnaire data (Table 4.16). They are item 20 ($t(9) = 2.44$, $p = 0.03$), item 25 ($t(9) = 4.34$, $p = 0.001$), item 33 ($t(9) = 2.90$, $p = 0.01$) and item 35 ($t(7) = 2.23$, $p = 0.04$). Three of the items (item 20, item 33, item 35) constituted Factor C: feelings of trust and safety. The final item that was significant (item 25) was part of Factor D: family

and friends connections. These findings are explored in further detail in the next chapter.

Table 4.16 Differences in perceptions between families and students

Item no.	Questionnaire text
20	I believe that most people can be trusted.
25	I believe that my local community located on the Northwest Coast of Tasmania feels like home.
33	I trust the local council.
35	I trust the legal system.

4.11 CONCLUSION

This chapter presents the results of the analysis of the codes, categories and themes constructed through the initial, focused and axial coding stages. The various issues raised by participants were reflected on, the discussion highlighted and the patterns identified. The coding allowed for the identification of various issues pertaining to the influences on participant agency in the classroom environment

The detail provided about the coding stages in this chapter demonstrated a number of codes constructed from the student interviews referred specifically to elements readily identifiable with the theoretical concept of social capital. These issues, beliefs and behaviours were further evident in the categories that were constructed through a further process of patterning of the initial codes. The categories highlighted, clarified and grouped these data patterns. Similarly, the themes from the axial coding showed overall patterns and drew attention to the ways that the codes and categories related. The initial, focused and axial coding of the test session transcript and interview data showed overlap, divergence and conflict in the themes across those data.

The results of these first three coding stages enabled six themes to form and facilitate this research focus on the influence of social capital networks on student subjectivity in the school and home environment. The five research questions were addressed through the fourth coding stage, by which the themes were re-examined and the dominant discourses regarding the research questions and within the data patterns identified. The results of that process are presented in the following chapter.

All six themes enabled the research questions to be addressed by highlighting from the data how participants were influenced by place (Theme One, Theme Two, Theme Three, Research Question One, Research Question Two), the presence and influence of social capital networks in families (Theme Two, Theme Three, Research Question Two, Research Question Three, Research Question Four), and the process through which students enact their agency in a general sense and in the learning process specifically (Theme Five, Theme Six, Theme Three, Theme Two, Theme Four, Research Question Three, Research Question Four, Research Question Five).

The following three chapters present the data that were gleaned from this study. Drawing heavily on interview data, Chapters 5 and 6 illustrate the main influences at play as young people construct their knowledge of, beliefs about and aspirations for post-secondary education. Following from these observations, Chapter 7 develops a theory of an intervention that can be effective in bringing about change to a student's embodied cultural capital.

CHAPTER 5: SOCIAL CAPITAL

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The following two chapters identify people and conditions, which influence student social capital in the area of the learning process. This chapter explores student participants' social capital and its impact on their knowledge, belief and application towards participation and achievement at school. Chapter 6 explores the role, application and function of cultural capital.

This chapter concludes the presentation of the data analysis commenced in the previous chapter. The previous chapter presented the results of the student and family questionnaires, and the first three stages of coding analysis from which the six themes emerged. This chapter presents the results of the final coding stage: theoretical coding. The results of this theoretical coding stage build on, continue and conclude the previous coding stages to construct theory grounded in the data.

This chapter moves beyond noting the various codes and categories that constitute themes, contributing increasing depth and theoretical interpretation of the meanings within the data. The previous chapter described and exemplified the processes and results of the coding stages to provide a mandate for identifying the most illustrative examples of the central themes located in the data. Examples drawn from the data, therefore, show variations within and across participants' arguments.

This chapter is organised in two main sections, derived from the theoretical framework of bonding and bridging social capital. The six themes are presented in relation to their identification as bonding social capital and bridging social capital. These constructs are:

Bonding social capital:

- Parental influence
- Sibling influence
- Peer influence

Bridging social capital:

- The influence of teachers
- The influence of other role models
- Other sources of influence

5.2 BONDING SOCIAL CAPITAL: THE ROLE OF PARENTS

From a theoretical perspective, dispositions towards learning first become established within the family. Recent research establishes parental occupation and levels of education as the best predictors of academic participation and achievement (Dubow, Boxer & Huesmann, 2009). This section begins by describing the income and educational experiences of parents participating in the research. Questions 8 to 12 of the parent questionnaire asked participants to identify main source of income, income level and qualifications. Similar questions were posed to student interview participants, who generally answered in greater depth. Together, these data revealed a number of contrasting points of view.

5.2.1 Parental occupation

Chapter 4 established that the parents undertaking the questionnaire were largely from low socio-economic strata as measured by parental occupation (Table 5.1). Around 17% of parents identified as employed in professional or managerial occupations (Table 5.1). This compares with 33% of the Australian population (ABS, 2006).

Table 5.1 Parental occupation (N = 6 parents)

<i>Occupations</i>	Professional/Managerial	Clerical/Skilled	Semi-skilled	Unemployed
Number of parents	1	2	3	0
% of parents	17	17	66	0

Of the six participants, one parent was working in a professional or managerial field. Two parents identified their occupation as clerical or skilled. Of the rest, 50% of parents identified their occupations being semi-skilled. Interestingly, no parent was reported as being unemployed. It should be noted; no particular 'type' of parent was sought for the survey, nor was there an attempt to seek a 'range of types'.

As parental occupation represents one of the prime indicators of student achievement and post-secondary destinations (Dubow, Boxer & Huesmann, 2009), children's aspirations would be expected to broadly mirror the career choices of their

parents. However, this is clearly not the case for the young people in this study. Parental occupation limited neither the aspirations of parents for their children, nor the career aspirations of the young people themselves. The young people appeared to be able to look beyond their parents as role models for their choice of occupation.

Even more than parental occupation, parental levels of education are increasingly recognised as the best predictor of a young person's post-secondary destination (Universities Australia, 2008, p. 14). A total of 34% of family questionnaire respondents identified as having a bachelor degree or higher, which is above the 19% of Australians as a whole (ABS, 2012). This figure is well above those for the population along the Northwest Coast of Tasmania (5%) and Tasmania (11.8%; ABS, 2012). Three of the parent participants identified a TAFE qualification as the highest level of education in their family. One parent had undertaken no further education beyond Year 10.

5.2.2 Parents as role models

One of the most obvious ways in which parents can act as role models is through providing their children with opportunities to observe them in their professional capacities. From a sociological point of view, having someone close to him or her who can act as a role model — someone who has successfully completed further education — might provide a powerful example of what is possible for the young person. This section presents the interview data as it relates to this phenomenon.

Only a few student participants talked about going to a parent's place of work. This experience seems to have given these young people an insight into the world of work, and in some cases provided motivation. For example, Claire, whose mother was a teacher-aide at a local school, “went to her office there and I used to help her out”. She reported that she had enjoyed the experience. Lauren described working with her parents most weekends as being:

... really hectic but also lots of fun. Every weekend we have different theme for the shop. Everyone who works weekends gets roped into dressing up and taking on a different personality. Mum and Dad run a different type of giftware store.

Phoebe identified working with her father over a number of school holidays as being a rewarding experience. Phoebe's father employed her to do undertake some boring kinds of jobs but she enjoyed the experience:

Dad employs me to do all the jobs he hates doing around his work. Dad gets me to do a lot of different things. Sometimes, I am cleaning up the work area or answering the phone. Other times, I help him to organise things ... it can be tiring but it is fun.

Having a positive role model in the immediate family appears to have helped these young people to feel at home in the world of work.

Not all participants identified a parent as a role model for the world of work or as a motivator to succeed in their education. This absence was not explicitly evident in the data as something of which the students were consciously aware; rather it is an example of a silence in the data. In the absence of another person acting as a role model, this may have impacted on the young people's ability to envisage them in a professional occupation. These effects are explored later in this chapter.

5.2.3 Parents as 'Don't do what I did' role models

While to some participants a parent acted as a positive role model of what can be achieved, for some the opposite was the case. Two of the participants reported their parents explicitly encouraged them not to end up in the same situation as them.

Jay reported his mother having 'dropped out' of school in Year 12. He told how his mother spoke of her working life in terms of "tedious jobs" and said that she "didn't want me to end up like her" but encouraged him to do "something easier to do and something that I want. Not something that I'm having to do cause it is the only choice". Similarly, Emma reported that her father had said that, "if they had their time again he would go on and give himself better options. And that's what he wants for me". Jay's mother and Emma's father had finished their schooling at the TAFE certificate level and Year 10 respectively. In these cases, the message from parents appeared to be not to make the same 'mistakes' as them.

A sense of parents communicating high aspirations for their children emerges strongly in this message. Among the parents who had some of the lowest educational outcomes themselves, a more satisfying career for their children was highly valued.

While they were not explicitly pushing a higher education, it was implied by their career aspirations for their children. It appears that, even when parents have little direct experience with higher education, they can still have a keen appreciation of its potential to alter the direction of their children's lives.

A less explicit, but nonetheless powerful, message came from two parents who went back to further their education as mature-age students. In these cases, the young people had witnessed their parents studying, doing assignments and struggling to balance study commitments with family and work. Kate described her mother's experience of tertiary education as:

... very stressful, especially because she still has a family at home. And she spends a lot of time up at night doing assignments ... and then has to go to work.

Phoebe's mother had gone back "to TAFE for like 3 years" and later "started studying education last year, while also working as a teacher-aide". Phoebe believes it is "not easy and it takes a lot of effort and time but it's all worth it in the end". For Kate and Phoebe, avoiding their parents' fate of having to work so hard for so long, and having to balance study with family and career, appears to have been an important motivator to work hard at school.

5.2.4 Parental support

Parental support emerged explicitly and consistently as a critical factor in shaping student participation and achievement at school. Irrespective of parental occupation or educational background, the majority of participants regarded their parents as their primary support. This support took many forms including emotional support, the provision of information, practical assistance and financial support. The type of support offered by parents seems to reflect the parents' own experiences of education and these variations appear to be behind some of the differences in the young people's beliefs. This section explores the various manifestations of parental support and examines the impact of this support on participants' beliefs.

5.2.5 Personal encouragement

The predominant form of parental support was that of personal encouragement of participants' engagement and achievement at school, which included offering words

of personal support, promoting motivation and ambition. This encouragement most commonly took the form of comments such as those of Emma's mother, who said she would, "support me in whatever I choose to do", and, "she says yeah, I can do that, as long as I'm happy with it". Similarly, Kate reported that her parents have dreams for her like:

... become a teacher, nurse or something to do with maths. But they say whatever we decide to do with our lives it needs to be productive and it needs to give back to the community. Don't expect other people to look after you.

All participants reported that their parents were supportive of their aspirations, and this support did not vary according to the parents' educational histories. Parents were an important source of motivation for most participants. For Claire, they were someone to "push me to stay on and keep going" and to "keep me to my studies, to not give up on it". Ben said his parents were particularly important in the encouragement they provided him:

Mum is always asking how things are going at school. She gives little pep talks in the car to school make sure I am getting things done. Mum and Dad encourage me a lot. My parents have a pretty positive attitude towards my schooling. Definitely.

In some cases parents boosted the confidence of students in their abilities, and helped them to decide if their chosen career was a good choice for them. Claire, who wants to go into teaching, said her parents "think teaching is a good choice for me because they know that I enjoy school as well and that I enjoy working with kids and stuff. And they think that I have the potential". Emma also looked to her mother for reassurance that she is making good decisions: "whatever I want to choose for a career, I discuss it with them first. And they tell me whether it is a good idea or not". None of the parents were reported as discouraging the young people, or even so much as suggesting they set their sights lower.

5.2.6 Economic influence

It was evident from comments made by several participants that an economic cost for parents was associated with their enrolment at the school. The fee-paying structure of the Catholic secondary college was not significant for most families; however, two participants acknowledged that their parents had experienced economic

hardship due to their enrolment. The two participants, Jay and Emma, were influenced to act in differing ways as a result.

Emma was acutely aware her parents sacrificed financially, “so I could attend my school”. According to Emma, her parents were “not wealthy but believed a good education was money well spent”. In Year 8, Emma’s parents had to have a meeting with the Principal because they were finding it hard to pay the school fees and additional costs for her and brother. but it all worked out:

Before my parents had the meeting with the school, me and my brother were going to have to enrol in another school. Dad found it hard to ask for help from the school but things worked out ok in the end. The school helped us in a few different ways.

As a result of this event, Emma has always felt that she needed to be serious when it came to participating and achieving at school. Emma felt that her parents were making a real economic sacrifice to send her to the Catholic secondary school that “made me aware that I needed to work hard and make the most of what the school was offering”.

Jay was aware that his parents sometimes had problems with paying “all the fees” of the school. At the end of last year (2009) when Jay failed a number of subjects, his parents suggested that “I was wasting their money by not turning up to class, failing everything and getting into arguments with teachers”. Jay’s mother suggested that he might be better off going to the local government secondary college but that was offer was withdrawn after some one-on-one discussions:

Mum thought it was a great idea ... but then changed after thinking of the bogans [a derogatory term for uncouth or unsophisticated persons, regarded as being of low social status] and the amount of trouble I could get into at the other school.

Results thus far indicate that parents’ experience of education directly impacted on the accuracy and specificity of information they were able to provide. This effect was particularly strong when it came to the issue of the costs involved in going on to tertiary education. In many cases, the young people were ignorant of the payment arrangements, or held misconceptions regarding the costs. There was little clarity among these participants about how much university might cost or what these costs might involve, with most expressing a vague notion that it would be expensive. In most

cases the young people and their parents believed they would need to pay tuition fees. Nonetheless, most parents demonstrated their support by offering to pay. Given the straitened financial circumstances articulated by some of the participants, this is further evidence of the high value the parents placed on further education.

Financial constraints and misconceptions about the costs of going to university were a concern for several students, and in some cases presented a potential barrier to transition. For example, Jay initially said that the cost of university was “a problem” and that his mother had said that, “we will have to see what happens”. Consequently, he felt that “if I can't go for free, then why bother trying at all in subjects at school”. Claire also acknowledged that the economic cost might “influence where I want to study next year or that I might take a gap year”.

Another common theme when discussing the financial implications of undertaking further education was parents' willingness to pay for it. There was often little clarification of what the actual cost of further education might involve. Emma's parents had said they would “help pay for everything if I do get there” but additionally she was saving money from a weekend job to not “be a big burden” on her parents. Lauren has been working hard “to earn that money” to attend university. Similarly, Phoebe's parents had said it “doesn't matter how much it costs, you're gonna [sic] go” and “I don't have to worry about it, it's all covered.” Once again, these parents demonstrated a strong commitment to their children's education, but incomplete or inaccurate knowledge about the costs of going on to further education.

In contrast, those students who had a parent who attended university had a general idea of the options available to them when going on to further education. Ben knew that “you get time after you finish the course to pay it off as well.” He also related that his parents would help with the costs, but rather than simply saying they will “pay for everything” Ben knew, from his parents, that this would involve “trying to pay it off ... the [Higher Education Contribution Scheme], accommodation and stuff”.

Phoebe, whose mother was currently studying at university, knew university costs “a lot” because “I saw one of my Mum's bills”. Similarly, Kate said that money was not an issue in her home but she had always known that she had “options to pay it off later”. It would seem, notwithstanding the information that may be available to these

students through their schools, having a parent who has had direct experience of university was critical in shaping their understanding regarding the costs of going to university.

5.2.7 Parents as a source of information

It appears that parental occupation and education had an impact on the aspirations of young in the interview sample, through informing their knowledge of their post-secondary options and of what is required to gain entry into university. The young people generally sought two types of information. First, they wanted to know what their educational options were, and secondly, what was necessary to gain entry. Not surprisingly, the parents' ability to provide accurate information directly reflected their own experience of education.

Parents were often the first port of call when students were seeking information about career and study options. Kate states if "I'm not too sure of something I'll ask my Mum and she will help me find out about it. She'll ask someone and that's basically how I find out my information". Claire believes her mother is particularly helpful, "because she goes on-line and looks up the information which I need to know for university, and the prerequisites".

In a few cases, one parent was employed in a field that gave them access to some specific information. For example, due to her work at a Catholic primary school, Claire's mother was able to inform her "if I want to teach at a Catholic school, Australian Catholic University is right at the top of the list". Similarly Kate's mother, who is a teacher-aide, said her mother would research information to help understand what is required of her:

Mum looks into career things for me at her school. She looks on-line and searches a lot of different places for me. Mum knows the pathways coordinator at her school and checks with her when she doesn't understand certain things.

Notwithstanding their obvious desire to help their children, some parents were generally not a useful resource regarding further education options. For example, Jay said of his mother that "she don't really know much about being a writer, so there's nothing she can do to help. Just encourage me I guess?" He believed some of his

teachers were more helpful in providing what is the right course and subjects for him but “mum does tell me to get down to work and make sure everything is up to date”.

In two cases, the parents’ inability to provide specific advice was because their own educational experience was not relevant to the current context of the student. The students involved expressed awareness of this lack of guidance. Jay’s father, who ‘dropped out’ after Year 10, said his Dad was “not really up to date with job or school stuff”. Emma’s father, who completed his education at the end of Year 10, was “not at all able to provide advice” to give the information she needed to know about “subject material, school in general or what was required to get into university — he would always tell me to ask Mum”; but if Emma’s mum were unsure, she would be told to:

... ask my teachers and be more questioning ... cause I'm not sure, and if I go ask them I'll be even more in doubt because they don't know anything either. So I go up to school and ask my teachers – that's what they say to do.

5.2.8 Practical intervention

While personal encouragement did not show any effects from parental education, there was a good deal of variation in the extent to which parents were able to provide other forms of assistance. Among parents with a higher education, encouragement often took a practical form. Many students reported that their parents kept them on track with homework and assignments, and sometimes helped with homework as well. Here, there appears to be a direct link between parental education and the amount and type of help students received with homework. Students with a parent who had completed or was undertaking further education reported that mum or dad would help them with specific schoolwork. A number of students identified that their parents had arranged tutoring to help with their grades.

Ben identified a number of times the active involvement of his parents in subject-based activities and assignments. Ben’s parents had stressed from an early age,

... that if I was having problems with school work, then I just had to ask for help. Dad is more mathematically or science minded. Mum is a bit more English based than Dad. Mum always pushes me and my brothers to make sure homework is finished.

The first person he approached when seeking guidance on schoolwork-based activities was his mother. According to Ben, his mum could answer “most questions but

relied upon dad when serious maths” become involved. In a variety of practical ways throughout his schooling, Ben has received advice and guidance with regard to humanities-based subjects that had “sent him down this path” because she “believes I am a fairly good writer myself”.

Phoebe’s parents actively intervened on a regular basis to ensure that she was achieving to the best of her ability at school. In particular her dad had always placed considerable importance on “getting good results and then moving on to university.” In recent weeks her dad had actively engaged Phoebe in the subject curriculum of English:

... Dad is good at editing stuff. He likes to correct my English assignments before I submit them to the teacher. Dad thinks I waffle too much and need to be more focused on answering the questions. He really helps me with English.

Over several months Phoebe was not academically achieving to the level expected by her parents, which resulted in a number of family meetings at home on the topic. Phoebe’s parents encouraged her to select subjects that played to her strengths:

At the start of the year I made some subject choices which were not good for me. I didn’t go so well in Chemistry and the teacher told me to think about choosing another subject before it is too late. My parents told me it was really important to play to my strengths at school.

For participants who had a parent who finished their education after Year 10, instances of help with homework and schoolwork were rare, with some students saying that they did not receive much help. In Emma’s case, her father worked long hours on the farm, which meant he was always “tired or asleep on the couch”. She reported, however, that her father always asked, “if assignments [were] due, getting homework done and stuff”. In a similar fashion, Jay’s father encouraged him to put “his head down, bum up” at school.

These parents were keen for their children to do well at school and spent time monitoring homework and assignments. They lacked the time, skills and/or confidence to translate this support into practical assistance. While all parents were supportive of their children's education, those who had undertaken post-Year 10 qualifications were more likely to be able to assist as well as monitor and encourage them.

5.2.9 Pressure

A number of students experienced pressure from at least one parent to undertake specific Year 12 educational options. Beyond an understanding that their parents want them to do their best and to follow the path that will be best for them, five students felt that going to university was an expectation. Emma reported that she had been aware that mother wanted her to go to university “since the day I was born”. Emma recalls that when she was younger,

... and people said they didn't want to go to uni that seemed really weird because I always had Mum telling me that I had to go after Year 12. Mum just wants me to get a career rather than a job.

Kate also felt strongly that her parents wanted her to go to university, and they would say, “it is really important to work and get into a good university.” According to Kate, her parents believe it is important to keep your options open when it comes to selecting potential university degrees:

Dad was telling me last year when I was selecting subjects that some degrees have prerequisites. Dad chose to do Maths Methods because he thought it would be a good subject to have. He has chosen this subject because it will be good for me in the long run.

Kate believes it has always been the expectation in her dad's family that “the standard of education for his family is university and so my whole family has been to university, my older brothers and sisters”. Consequently, Kate said that she had “always had it in my head that I have to go to uni at some point so you know, I have to study hard”. Kate spoke about this culture of high expectations, recalling family gatherings, where parents discussed their children's achievements:

Every Christmas my Dad's family are always saying stuff like 'oh, my daughter went here' and 'my daughter's doing this' or 'my son's doing that'. I just felt like a few years back, I needed to make sure I studied hard to make sure my name was up there. Because I think it's just really Dad's expectation that I just have to get in.

Both Emma and Kate had one parent who had undertaken further education at university level. Emma's mother had studied nursing at university. Kate's father had completed a business degree and her mother was undertaking tertiary studies. In each case, the young person recognised that their parents' education had been hard won, and this might in part explain their desire for their children “to succeed in a much easier

way than they did". Fortunately, neither Emma nor Kate appeared to feel that this pressure had altered their own objectives, as their own goals matched their parents' expectations.

5.3 SIBLINGS AS ROLE MODELS

In the immediate family, siblings are the second most important component of a young person's bonding social capital. After parents, they are the group with whom young people spend the most time throughout their school lives. All of the student participants had at least one sibling. Three of the participants acknowledged they come from, as Claire stated, "fairly large families" with three remaining students having a single sibling.

For a number of students, an older sibling acted as a role model for what needed to be done to successfully complete Year 12 and move on to further education options. A significant example of this effect was Lauren's sister, of whom she said "plays a bigger role in my life than my parents." Lauren stated she spent a considerable amount of time acting and behaving in ways that mirrored her sister's personality:

She is quiet but has a real power in her. Rebekah always works really hard at school ... things didn't come easy in some subjects but she never gave up. She was a college prefect but always made sure her responsibilities didn't distract from her subjects.

According to Lauren, when her sister was living at home, she would always focus on finishing school work before socialising with friends. A number of times during her secondary schooling, Lauren remembers her sister checking her assignment work and "helping me study for tests". She remembers feeling proud when her sister said

... she was proud of me for not being like other teenagers with their negative attitudes towards school. She encouraged me to work hard and always be myself at school and home. Her advice made me feel really proud about myself.

For a number of other participants, an older sibling acted as a role model illustrating what not to do when it came to school participation and achievement. Claire has an older brother who struggled academically in Year 12. Her brother had some "bad influences at school which pushed him back, like he didn't listen to Mum or Dad about what was required of him". These bad influences had been behind his failure to get

enough marks to get into his preferred university course. Claire's brother had to have a gap year to "work himself out". She says that this made her even more determined to go directly to university, both to pursue her own goals and so as not to be a further disappointment to her parents.

Kate also spoke of an older sibling who was an example of what not to do. Her older sister did not successfully finish Year 12 and was made to make some hard decisions. Kate's parents made her "attend the local government school the following year to get the required marks to get into university". According to Kate, her sister found the additional year hard because:

All her friends had left for university or travelling. Zoe was stuck in Torquay for another year, without any other options. She worked hard and got good grades but it was a waste ... all because she wanted to be a bit of a rebel.

For the majority of the student participants, there was an older sibling who acted as a positive role model by going on to further education. One or two students made mention of this absence, showing an awareness of its importance. For example, Jay said there had been "no-one, no-one at all that I saw, other than the students who came, from UTAS". More often, however, the lack of role models appeared as a silence in the data rather than as any consciousness of this absence among the participants.

5.4 THE INFLUENCE OF PEERS

Most interview participants reported that their friends were a source of encouragement to participate and achieve at school. Being of the same age, the young people's peers were in a position to act as positive or negative role models for student agency in the classroom. There was evidence that peers' intentions had both limiting and broadening effects on student participants. Several participants commented they found it helpful to have peers in their classrooms with similar backgrounds, social conduct expectations and aspirations. However, some identified the problem of hegemony as a result of these conditions. The presence or absence of these factors appears to have been influential on participants' motivation and sharing of information.

5.4.1 Peer aspiration

A number of students identified their peers as having a general educational focus beyond Year 12. They reported that most of their peers aspired to go to

university. Those who reported having friends with similar educational aspirations also said they found this helpful and encouraging, while those without were often conscious of what they were missing.

The participants reported that a large number of their peers were aiming to go to university, or to have professions that required a university degree. Lauren reported, “a lot of the people at my school want to go to university”. Lauren also said that most of her friends wanted to go to university, saying, “Claire wants to be a teacher and Anthony wants to be a lawyer”. She said that

... we just talk about it cause we know what each other is good at. Like Claire ... she is going to be good with kids. And you know, and because I was good at sport, she said I would make a good PE teacher. So we just talk about that and see if anything's changed.

This opportunity to share plans with peers appears to create a highly supportive environment.

This was quite a different experience for Jay, who reported that he and his friends “very occasionally” talked about their plans for the future. He believed one of his friends wanted to become a personal trainer. Another one wanted to do “something with computers. They don’t need university”. According to Jay, a lot of people at his school are

... expected to go to university. They don't have a choice about making other choices ... their parents pay money to come here and they are told to go to university after school. Everyone here takes themselves too serious [sic].

Emma said that among her friends “one of them wants to be a nurse and one wants to be an engineer”. Emma believed that serious students started focusing on their future educational paths and careers at the start of Year 11:

... people at school focus start selecting subjects good subjects for uni in Year 11 ... you really should have an idea where you want to go in the future ... not concrete but you need to have an idea about what you want to do after Year 12.

Underpinning Emma’s opinion is an assumption that genuine students at the college are focused on going to university rather than other post-Year 12 options such as TAFE or apprenticeships.

Ben said that all of his friends were talking about going to university at the end of Year 12. His peer group are focused on “being serious with their subjects”. According to Ben, personally selecting subjects in the senior years meant his peers were more focused in the classroom:

... in the lower years, people would be stupid and not take their subjects seriously ... my Year 10 class had a few idiots who were not focused ... being rude and annoying to everyone in the class, including the teacher ... they didn't care about doing well in their subjects.

The ‘few idiots’ identified by Ben are no longer attending the college because they have chosen, “... do more physical type of jobs ... most of them dropped out at the end of Year 10 to do apprenticeships and stuff like that ...”.

5.4.2 Vocational education

Vocational educational opportunities are offered at the college but a majority of the participants were focused on studying subjects that allowed access to university. None of the students acknowledged that they were studying vocational based subjects. Some of the students spoke of doing “fun or not serious subjects” in Year 12 such as Lauren who stated, “Art is my fun subject this year”. Kate said that she had “never thought about studying VET subjects, mostly because Mum and Dad would kill me”.

A few students spoke in a negative way about vocational subjects. Jay, who had a few friends studying VET (Vocational Education and Training) subjects at the college, spoke of them being unexciting and taught by unprofessional teachers:

VET is for bludgers who aren't smart enough to do pre-tertiary subjects. The teachers are dodgy, I'm not sure they properly qualified or anything.

Jay's view that VET subjects were for academically inferior students resonated with other participants involved in the research. Claire believed that VET subjects were for students, “who want to be carpenters or receptionists rather than something more serious”. Kate further ostracised students undertaking VET at the school by stating that they should be studying

... at the local TAFE or something ... I have heard Dad tell people that the school spends too much money on resources for VET, they really should go somewhere else where they will better catered for.

5.4.3 The influence of peers summarised

All of the participants had friends and peers at the school with whom they shared their plans. The majority shared the same aspiration to attend university. One or two participants identified peers who were unsure of their educational futures and were discouraging of their personal choice. While these attitudes did not dent the aspirations of those participants, friends' intentions and support could nonetheless be considered as possible influence on their beliefs and plans.

5.5 BONDING SOCIAL CAPITAL SUMMARISED

Several participants described the encouraging effects of having a family member or close peer who had successfully gone to university. These people provided inspiration and information, as well as personal encouragement and practical assistance. These factors had a positive effect on their knowledge of and beliefs about performing and achieving while at the Catholic secondary college. They also appeared to have had a positive effect on students' ability to envisage them undertaking university studies to achieve a professional occupation. Those who did not have access to such people in their close social world sometimes turned to their broader social world to find mentors who could provide a bridge to the world of tertiary education. The following section of this chapter now explores this bridging social capital.

5.6 BRIDGING SOCIAL CAPITAL — TEACHERS

Outside the family, schoolteachers were the most important source of support and sometimes exerted a powerful influence on participants' decision-making. Teachers played many roles, the main being the providers of information and advice. They also provided inspiration and encouragement, and in a few cases acted as role models of people who had gone to university and/or people working in the profession to which the participants aspired. A small number of participants, however, reported not talking to their teachers about their plans at all, or described negative effects of teachers' actions. Principally, teachers were perceived as an important source of information, and were often able to provide more specific and accurate information than participants received from home. In addition, some teachers acted as role models, and often were a source of encouragement or inspiration.

5.6.1 Teachers as a source of information

For many participants, teachers were their main source of information about subject choice, post-secondary options, and getting into university. For example, Emma, who wanted to do “something with animals”, spoke first to her biology teacher: “[h]e was talking to me about it, like you could do stuff like a Bachelor of Science and then specialise in zoology”. Her Physics teacher also played an important role when she was considering dropping the subject:

I was actually going to drop Physics and keep Sport Science. But then I got sat down and spoken to ... he asked me what I wanted to do, what courses ... he said most Science courses, Physics is a prerequisite as well. And you are better off doing that, as long as you do well it is better for your [Australian Tertiary Admission Rank] than a subject like Sport Science.

This timely intervention prevented Emma from taking a decision that might have precluded her from entering some of her preferred post-secondary options.

Phoebe reported that a teacher was a real help when she started thinking about further education. Phoebe said her teacher provided her with “information when I wanted to do a contemporary art course”. The House Head was able to tell her where it was possible to do the course and what she needed to do to get into the course. Similarly, Lauren said her homeroom teacher in Year 10 gave her,

... advice, like I asked him the kind of subjects I would need to get into uni. He gave me a couple of websites and some information from the school website ... I didn't have a good understanding about pre-tertiary subjects but he spoke to me about the pros and cons of doing these ... he also told me how some subjects are weighted more than others and how this helped your [Australian Tertiary Admission Rank].

Kate also mentioned gaining important advice and assistance from a teacher:

I was very confused and I didn't understand subject choices, I didn't understand prerequisites ... and I got all confused. I didn't understand the difference between level 15 course and level 10 course ... so I went to my English teacher with the school handbook ... we just sat down and went through it all, and he helped me.

While Lauren and Emma both mentioned a pathways week that occurred every year at school, conversations with teachers happened mainly on an ad hoc basis. Few students mentioned any other structured opportunities in class to plan for their futures.

For example, Claire reported that “we were just talking and the teacher asked what we wanted to do when we finished school — we kind of stumbled onto the subject”. Alternatively, some students had taken the initiative to approach teachers to seek specific information. Ben said that his English teacher “gave me information on where to go ... she advised me about where you could study journalism” but this was just because “I asked her”, rather than part of a structured class activity.

Despite teachers being frequently cited as a useful source of information, one participant had not had conversations with any teachers about their post-secondary plans. Jay said he would probably find certain teachers helpful and approachable, yet said, “I don't really talk to any of them about my career”. He did have an opportunity to focus on his future educational pathway earlier in the school year but “I couldn't be bothered to talk to any of them”.

It appears that, in the absence of structured opportunities in class, the opportunity to receive guidance from teachers was left largely to the initiative of individual students. For those with initiative and/or a clear goal in mind, this was not a problem. Others, however, appeared to need an impetus to open up these conversations. This suggests a role for a school program in providing a stimulus to open these channels of communication and thereby provide all students with equitable access to a vital resource.

5.6.2 Teachers as a source of encouragement

Many participants described their teachers as encouraging, and reported this encouragement was helpful to them as they undertook their studies and made plans for the future. For example Kate had this to say: “just reminding you constantly that you have to study. It's not just going to come ... that sort of thing”.

Some participants rated teacher encouragement as critical. As Ben said “there's [sic] teachers who make a difference.” Ben acknowledged the support of “all my teachers throughout my whole time at school. Especially the ones now helping me with the subjects and stuff that I want to do, that I need to do to get into university”. Similarly, Phoebe said:

Well I have to say that Mr. [D---], who is the English coordinator for debating and public speaking, he is really cool and a lot of it is thanks to him because if he hadn't chosen me to be in the debating team I wouldn't have been so sure that I could actually do Law.

For Lauren, it was her homeroom teacher who was particularly important:

The first person I would say is important is my homeroom teacher. 'Cause without him I wouldn't know what was out there. Like it was too big for me to even realize that it was actually there. But with him, he would understand my interests and everything, just to put me on the right path.

Lauren also said that other teachers also played an important role:

The teachers here at school are pretty good. My English teacher is always telling us about what needs to be done when at uni. When you're at uni you've got to write essays this way. Like they always say that so then in your head you do want to get up to that uni standard.

For Lauren, this combination of high expectations, empathy and information has helped shape her view on going to uni.

Teachers' encouragement, however, may have been largely reserved for those students who teachers perceived as special — those who were already motivated and achieving at high levels, such as the majority of those in the interview sample. Others did not fit this mould. For example, Jay had little to say about his teacher encouragement, noting one teacher “doesn't say anything, just doesn't care”. Jay identified one particularly negative encounter with a teacher:

I found that the education support – the teachers there, they didn't exactly encourage me to do my best. They didn't really believe in me, didn't try to stop me doing what I was doing ... I had a lot of problems and it affected my education but some of the teachers here didn't care about giving me some advice or positive feedback.

This highlights the importance of teachers communicating belief in their students' capabilities, and encouraging them to aim high. Indeed, in Jay's case, were it not for his girlfriend who became a significant influence, there was a very real prospect that Jay's teachers' low expectations would become self-fulfilling.

5.6.3 Teachers as role models and inspiration

Teachers can spark interest and promote achievement in their subject areas and, for at least one participant, were the key motivation to pursue the subject beyond school. Ben said that in English,

[w]e had a good teacher. I started to learn heaps about it and I enjoyed it and I was getting like the highest mark. That was my subject with the best mark, English. So just from there I started enjoying it, so I chose to pick the subjects in Year 11 and 12.

While this was an important effect for Ben, it was not noted among any of the other participants in this study.

Another important role that a few teachers played was that of role model. Claire said she spoke to her homeroom teacher “because she's a PE teacher so she knows, and she loves PE teaching too”. Similarly, Lauren found some teachers “pretty helpful, especially the young teachers, because they've done it so recently, so they are be able to tell me about what they've done and what I need to do”. Lauren was particularly inspired by her schoolteachers: “I'd always imagined myself like my favourite teachers. Like, I'd imitate them ... I will combine all my favourite teachers together ... but in my way as well”.

This effect was not widespread or strong and only featured in the cases of participants who specifically aspired to become teachers. For the majority of participants, teachers were most often cited as an important source of information about getting to university. While many acknowledged their encouragement or inspiration, the provision of information was spoken of much more frequently and rated as more important than any of the other roles played by teachers. When looking for someone to act as a role model, most participants turned to other significant adults in their social worlds.

5.7 OTHER ROLE MODELS

Some of the participants in the research acknowledged role models outside their immediate family and school. These people were members of the extended family, the friends of older siblings or neighbours. In most cases, these role models were not particularly close to the participants. Rather, they met up occasionally and may have had conversations with them around work or study. For a small number of participants, there was a person who acted as a bridge to the otherwise unknown world of further education or of a professional career and who therefore played a significant role in helping to shape their participation at school and future aspirations.

Among those who mentioned others in their social sphere who had been successful at school and then gone on to university was Kate. She talked about her cousin, whom she sometimes met at Christmas but generally didn't have much opportunity to talk with. Kate said "I'm not able to because she lives in Launceston ... so I don't have much chance to see her." She also mentioned one other person who attended her school. Over the summer holidays they met and "had a conversation and had a chat about the future". Another potential role model for Kate was a person whom she met at the gym and who studied at university. While these were not people in Kate's everyday social world, they nonetheless represented someone similar to Kate, to whom she looked for inspiration.

Many similar conversations took place with a few other participants, typified by Jay: "My old boss at work used to ask me how things are going ... we once had a big talk about doing something after school". Like Kate's potential role models, Jay's old boss could have been an example of what is possible; however, as the relationship was not close it is apparent his influence was not strong.

5.8 ROLE MODELS AS INSPIRATION

For several participants, merely knowing a family friend or relative who had a professional career was inspiration in itself. Watching this person at work or talking to them about it often motivated the young people to want to do something similar. It also helped some to believe that such a career might be possible. One example of this was Ben, whose mother's uncle was a sports journalist. Ben said:

I had an interest in it before but then he just tells me all about stuff I could do and everything like that. What's involved. And I think it sounds, it interests me, it's something I want to do, like, I actually want to go further in it.

For Emma, this inspiration came from family friend who was an agricultural scientist and who has "an incredible company car." When her family friend visited their place, she found her anecdotes and business accessories a motivating factor as "I started to think it was a really good job". For Lauren, it was her uncle, a union organiser, who provided inspiration. He lives in Hobart so she did not see him often, but he had nonetheless influenced her. She described the experience of visiting his workplace:

He took me to his office and it was really good — it was awesome. Just like to see your uncle accomplish something he's always wanted to do — just the learning you need to do and all the stuff you have to go through to become one.

Her older cousin, a pharmacist, whom she had seen when she was employed at his workplace for a few weeks, also inspired Lauren:

I worked in my cousin's workplace, he's a pharmacist ... people would come in with problems and he would help them ... so I want to do something which helps people.

Lauren also felt he was “helping me with some of the words to understand some things better” at work. Between these two social contacts, Lauren had opportunities both to experience the world of work and to discover some career opportunities that she would not otherwise have witnessed in her immediate family.

Several interview participants aspired to become teachers and this goal was often inspired by people they knew. For example, Claire had the opportunity to observe her aunt at work on a visit to her workplace. She said, “I remember attending the school where my aunty was teaching these small kids and they just loved it”. Lauren also wanted to become a teacher and put this down to “influence by my family. My aunty's a teacher, my cousin's a teacher, and so I want to be a teacher”.

Some participants were aware of relatives who were professionals, but, as these relatives lived elsewhere in Tasmania or interstate, the opportunities for them to provide accurate information were limited. For example, Ben reported, “I have a few cousins in my family are involved in sports administration but they live in Hobart or Melbourne”. These cousins were, in part, behind his motivation to think about a career in sport journalism or sports administration, as they said, “it's a really good job”. Of more importance, however, was another uncle who works for a major sporting organisation in Hobart, but contacts and visits regularly. In addition to providing insight into the jobs available, he painted a picture of the experience of studying business administration at university: “the work is really good but the university courses can be hard. And especially the first year — you could fail the whole year”.

Similarly, Emma talked to her cousins, who were currently at university, and who told her that “there's a big workload and you've got to study hard ... you can't bludge

around, you've actually got to do your work and so you've gotta [sic] like what you're doing cos [sic] it's a lot bigger than school”.

Jay related how he talked to his brother’s friend about being a journalist or writer. He was at a party and Jay spoke to “one of my brother's friends [who] is studying journalism ... I've spoken to him a few times. Nothing in-depth, just asked if he enjoys it. Yeah. He said the money’s not that great”. Once again, having a social connection with someone who was working in his chosen career area was helpful to Jay as he built up a picture of what the prerequisites were, and the right course to take.

5.9 ROLE MODELS IN THE MEDIA

A few participants relied on television or movies to provide insight into the nature of what was required to perform at school, and for one or two they provided a type of role model. Jay identified several movies that influenced his wanting to be a writer. According to Jay, “*The Basketball Diaries* showed me that you could write about different stuff ... and not be told to write on subjects which are chosen for you for by the teacher”. Jay also acknowledged the film *Capote* as influencing his interest in writing:

Capote is a fucking dark movie about murders and stuff ... it is based on real life murder of a family ... Capote writes about the gruesome stuff but also gets to know the two murderers ... they are bad people but also a lot like normal people.

Phoebe felt the movie *Rushmore* provided a great insight in how to be different but still be serious at school. Phoebe states:

Max [the main character] in Rushmore is a real geek, who involves himself in a huge variety of different groups at school ... Max involves himself in all the different groups and opportunities at school because he is unsure about the future but things worked out in the end ... I kind of related to him.

In a sense the character of Max from the film *Rushmore* acted as a role model for Phoebe. Given events of the previous few weeks regarding subject changes for Phoebe, the film established a sense that involving you in the life of school and having personal resilience was important.

The television show *Bondi Vet* played a minor role in the life of Emma. She watched the television show mainly because it showed an application of the science and dealing with animals:

I am a bit embarrassed but I like watching Bondi Vet ... they show all the different procedures and animals involved in the life of a vet ... for me the fact he loves animals but is able to keep his emotions in control is great.

These factors had a positive effect on the young people's knowledge of post-secondary study alternatives, entry requirements and the financial implications of going to university. They also appear to have had a positive effect on their self-efficacy and ability to envisage themselves as university student and/or professional. Finally, they had a positive effect on the young people's beliefs about the relevance and attainability of a university education.

Where the young people did not have access to someone within the family or peer group who had been to university, they were sometimes able to identify other significant persons in their extended social circle who could act the part of mentor. For those who did not have access to any role models, the lack generally presented not so much as a barrier or discouraging effect, but as an absence of encouraging effects. This absence was often not explicitly felt or expressed by participants.

5.10 CONCLUSION

All participants related the encouraging effects of having access to someone within their family or peer group who had been to university. Such role models provided encouragement in a number of ways, including:

- acting as role models of what it is possible to achieve;
- giving personal encouragement, sometimes experienced as pressure;
- providing information about course options, entry to university and the university experience; and
- offering practical assistance and financial support.

These factors had a positive effect on the student's knowledge of post-secondary study alternatives, entry requirements and the financial implications of going to university. They also appear to have had a positive effect on their self-efficacy and ability to envisage themselves as university student and/or professional. Finally, they

had a positive effect on the students' beliefs about the relevance and attainability of a university education.

This chapter demonstrates that neither parental encouragement nor students' aspirations varied in accordance with parents' occupation and educational experience. Rather, all parents displayed positive attitudes towards higher education and all encouraged their daughters and sons to aim high and work hard. Further, the majority of survey and interview participants aspired to go to university and enter a professional occupation, regardless of their parents' occupations and levels of education.

It therefore does not appear to be a matter of either parental attitude, or of student aspirations, which causes their under-representation in higher education. Rather, there is an observable difference in participants' cultural capital; that is their knowledge of and beliefs about university, which reflects their parents' experience of higher education. This suggests the possibility for an intervention to fill the gaps and/or correct the misconceptions young people about university; this would be particularly helpful for those who are lacking in successful role models in their everyday social worlds. The following chapter explores the means by which young people acquire this cultural capital, before examining the impact of the intervention on this process.

CHAPTER SIX: CULTURAL CAPITAL

6.1 INTRODUCTION: EMBODIED CULTURAL CAPITAL

Following from the previous chapter, which presented data relating to participants' social capital, this chapter presents the data relating to participants' embodied cultural capital, and commences with identifying the influence of participants' habitus on their participation and achievement at school.

This chapter is organised into three main sections. The first section describes the conversations described by participants within their immediate social worlds, about participation and achievement at school and future educational aspirations. The second section explores participants' knowledge of post-secondary pathways, courses, entry requirements and the costs of study. The third and final section explores participants' personal characteristics, including their work ethic, goal orientation, identity and self-efficacy, and also describes participants' beliefs about university with regard to its desirability, relevance and attainability. Within each section, participants' habitus is explored.

6.2 FAMILY CONVERSATIONS

One way in which a family's embodied cultural capital becomes evident is in the nature of conversations that commonly take place in the home. These conversations provide a window to strongly held beliefs of family members, such as what it means to successfully finish Year 12, and on the influences that may shape a young person's beliefs and aspirations. It is proposed that conversations about the importance of education and undertaking further education build a picture of students' potential future self. When these conversations present a positive picture, feature people to whom the young people relate as being like themselves, it is proposed that they are more likely to grow up believing that positively engaging with education and undertaking further education are not only desirable but also relevant and attainable. These beliefs raise their aspirations and transition to further education. In Bourdieuan terms such 'conversations' provide some of the right sort of cultural capital. Conversations between the participants and their parents focused on motivation, academic guidance and future educational aspirations.

In a general sense, parental conversations with participants were based on motivation and were divided along the lines of short and long-term goals. All participants said that conversations with parents focused on the short-term aims of ensuring schoolwork was up to date and assessment pieces had been completed. It appears, however, that the frequency and the linking of these aims with longer-term educational aspirations were inconsistent or not present in the parental conversations of some participants.

Ben identified a number of family conversations centred on the importance of being up to date with schoolwork and assessment items. He stated his mother played an important role in ensuring “everything was finished and passed in” on time. Ben said:

Mum is super organised ... I guess you need to be with six kids. Mum is always pumping me for information about what assignments are due and what needs to be done next ... She makes sure things are finished, even if it's on the way home from a football game in Launceston.

Ben's parents frequently link the short-term goals of school with longer-term educational aspirations of attending a 'good' university in the future. Ben remembers a conversation with his parents about potential educational aspirations:

I can't remember, but it was like a family talk. You know, everybody was talking and I said I wanted to be a journalist. And my Mum looked at me and said 'If you want to get into a good university for journalism, you are going to have to get a good ATAR.' Mum always brings this up when things are due at school.

Ben's parents appear to be acting as a useful sounding board for what was required to get into specific university course. The response appears to be an affirming belief that he was able to achieve the required score to get into university but he needed to be focused. The unspoken message here is that Ben was likely to get the marks required and, perhaps, that 'good' universities are for people like him.

Kate's father regularly spoke to her about the importance of completing schoolwork on time and to a high standard. She believes he is seeking to instil “his high personal standards” in his family. Kate had a number of conversations with her father about the importance of working to the best of your capabilities:

Dad is a bit fussy about school work ... he starts off with a few gentle reminders about school work which sometimes turn into full-on arguments

about making sure me and my sisters give our full attention ... rather than passing in something a bit dodgy.

Phoebe related conversations where her parents shared their experiences of successfully completing Year 12 and then moving on to university. The common theme of these parental conversations was successful management of the short-term school workload, which was linked to future educational success. Phoebe's father regularly told her that she needed to get used to doing a lot of school work because at university "you need to study a lot and like there's no break from it". She recalled how her parents frequently told her the importance of being organised and being prepared to sacrifice short-term personal activities for a greater educational goal:

Like every time they're cooking dinner, they're like 'you know when I was in uni this' ... They would always bring back stories of how hard it was being at uni ... My Mum is always telling me how I have all the time in the world to study — she never did because she'd have to do the housework, work while doing uni.

In contrast, Jay's parental conversations were focused on day-to-day issues, without a significant focus or linking with future educational aspirations. Jay believed his parents wanted him to achieve at school but did not provide a clear framework to achieve this success: "Mum and Dad are always telling me to do my best at school but they never show me how". He appreciates that they care but wishes they were able to help him academically:

Mum sent me here ... but then doesn't give a shit about helping me. Dad is useless with school stuff but Mum is always busy doing something else ... so I am left doing all this stuff by myself.

Beyond superficial motivation based on when "assignments are due," Jay's parents appeared unable to link its importance to a broader motivational framework for present and future educational success. In the past year, a lot of his parental conversations were focused on short-term social problems at school:

Last year was shit. I didn't really give a shit about school ... Mum was always coming to school to talk to teachers about me ... at home she would tell me to behave but then leave me alone ... no help or anything to do with school stuff or the future.

In summary, the majority of parental conversations identified in this research tended to focus on fostering the importance of motivation, provide academic guidance and focus on future educational aspirations. Successful parental conversations with

students tended to be frequent in nature, and usually started early in their secondary schooling. This appears to have helped students to develop a picture of what was required of them to academically achieve at school. For a majority of parents, going to university was a desirable outcome, which was promoted as being readily attainable with the formation of the correct mind-set. Parental conversations with students that were vague in nature and did not directly link the development of specific personal attributes were generally less successful.

6.3 CONVERSATIONS AMONG PEERS

For a majority of the student participants, conversations with peers centred on the importance of active participation and achievement in 'academic' subjects occurred frequently. Future career and study plans were also a regular topic of conversation among students. It appears the frequency and numbers of peers played a pivotal role in effectiveness.

Ben believes a "bit of competition" is good when it came to participation and achievement in the classroom. Ben says "I work hard to get good grades and my friends do the same ... If a friend gets a better score than me on an assignment, I will work harder next time to get a better award". While the competition between Ben and his friends is convivial in nature, it nonetheless does have a serious side:

A few of the boys from football team do the same subjects as me ... before mid-year exams, we had a bit of a joke about who would get better marks in Maths ... I worked hard to make sure I got a competitive result.

As noted in the previous chapter, Ben believes that in the senior years of school, it is important to take participation and achievement more seriously than in previous years. A few times in the past Ben had conversations with friends about 'idiots' in their classroom but not so much in his current subjects: "people are trying to do their best in their subjects ... we don't have any time to be stupid".

In a similar way, Emma contends that conversations with peers about school are focused on trying to help each other and exploring future educational aspirations:

... sometimes you can struggle with the amount of work ... my friends help each other to avoid too much stress ... we are able to talk about problems with school work which is important ... each person has their strengths and weaknesses which means we can usually help each other out.

For Emma, students in Years 11 and 12 should have a good idea about “their future jobs” and the required educational pathway to achieve this goal. Emma has had a number of conversations with peers focused on going to university: “I think all my friends are going to uni ... some people might have a gap year but they will go to university in the future”. Emma contends her friends having a future educational focus means they tend to focus on “what needs to be done in the classroom ... rather than mucking around with friends ... we still have fun but are serious when it is needed”.

Lauren tends to spend a lot of time “trying to motivate” friends to achieve their full potential. Her friends are “respectful of the teachers, making sure they listen and stuff” but they can sometimes become a bit “side-tracked” with the daily social events of the school: “I have some friends who can be a bit noisy and stuff in some subjects ... friends give you confidence to speak in class but sometimes ... I need to settle things down to make sure things get done.” In a more personal sense, she identifies a specific friend who shares similar goals, which was an important motivator for achievement in the classroom. Lauren states:

I really like to talk to her a lot about what I'd like to do in the future because she is sort of on the same wavelength as me, like what we want to do.... She's really interested in going to uni and that, because she's just really focused like me.

In the previous chapter, Kate was quoted talking extensively about the culture of high achievement among her extended family. Kate's friends at school frequently have conversations centred on school work, sharing resources and working hard: “In class, I am pretty quiet but work hard with my small group of friends ... we talk about what things need to get done and what needs to be included in assignments”. She recalls a number of conversations among her friends about future educational aspirations: “one wants to study Maths at a mainland university and the other wants to do Pharmacy.” Kate related how important these friends were in motivating her, saying:

We are always talking about going university and every time they say something about it, I want to do it — not because they were doing it, but I wanted to achieve something as well ... My friends are — they are always working hard and they are pushing me to work hard as well.

Kate was very clear about the importance of this group of peers as a positive influence that motivates her to go to university.

While most participants reported that they had friends and peers who shared their attitudes, values and aspirations, for a few participants their friends were overtly negative. Jay's friends were planning to study at TAFE or get apprenticeships. He described conversations with his friends on the topic of his plans to go to university:

... they feel it is a waste of time going to uni... they think you should finish school and then get a job or apprenticeship ... they think it is important to get a job so you have money to do stuff, like buy a nice car.

A number of Jay's friends have already left school to pursue apprenticeships or other employment opportunities. Jay identifies as having the intention to university but finds it hard to focus when "teachers just whine about shit all the time and everyone else in the class is stuck up". Fortunately, Jay had a girlfriend who hoped to go to university. Together, "my girlfriend and me [sic] go on the [web]sites. We just talk about what she wants to do and what I want to do".

In summary, a majority of students in the research shared positive conversations with their peers about school and study. These conversations appear to have a direct influence on student agency with regard to appropriate values and behaviours to be incorporated into their classroom performance. A strong belief among the student participants is the importance of future attendance at university. It should be noted, however, these conversations were not universal in nature.

6.4 PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

The analytical categories of social and cultural capital were derived from the theoretical framework in advance of data collection. During the early stages of data analysis, however, it became apparent that there were additional factors and conditions impacting on participants' participation and achievement at school. Many participants were aiming high and achieving at high levels, regardless of their family circumstances. It became apparent that it was not only factors in their social and cultural worlds that needed to be investigated, but also the personal characteristics of the participants themselves.

The young people in the research were a remarkable group. All but one had high aspirations for academic achievement and post-secondary study. Almost everyone came across as a motivated, hard-working student and all were drawn from the upper half of

their respective cohorts. It was beyond the scope of this study to identify participants' academic abilities with specificity but there appeared to be a wide range of achievement among the group.

In one other important regard they demonstrated a wide variance in their self-efficacy. While several described themselves as confident and doing well at school, a small proportion had low self-efficacy with regard to their belief in their chances of good results at the end of the Year 12 and going on to university. Participants' personal characteristics will be explored under conceptual headings that emerged in the first two stages of data analysis. These are:

- goal orientation and work ethic;
- pragmatism;
- self-efficacy; and
- identity.

6.4.1 Goal orientation and work ethic

Goal orientation is employed here to describe how the young people set career or study goals for themselves, and how they felt they were working towards these goals. Work ethic is used to describe how participants described themselves in their efforts with their schoolwork. While these two began as theoretically discrete constructs, there was a high degree of overlap when participants described themselves. Hence, the two are dealt with together.

Many participants talked about the importance of setting goals for themselves with regard to their achievement at school and post-secondary study options. For example, Emma said that despite being concerned that she might not get the marks she would need to be accepted into her preferred courses, "I still you know, pursue my goals, trying to get into the best marks to get into university I want to attend". There was little variation in participants' beliefs around the importance of effort, with many articulating the importance of working hard to achieve their goals, and almost all describing themselves as motivated and hard-working. For example, Kate described herself:

I always set my goals. You have to achieve. I'm a really hard worker, I don't need to be told to do my work, I just study. I'm really work-driven. And I always look to the future — I'm a planner.

Lauren also saw herself as working hard, saying:

I study every night, because if I don't start now it's going to be very hard for me when I go to university. So I study, I do research and I read everything about what I've learned, and look whether I have any homework or assignments.

In Year 10, Lauren remembered looking through her sister's English and Biology books to get a feel for and "prepare for the following years".

Participants also valued the role of motivation and, in particular, self-motivation in moving them towards their goals. Ben saw "the motivation to keep going ... just concentrating on school work" as an important ingredient in his future success. He believed that, to get good marks, he needed to "stay focused on my subjects, put in the necessary work and keep that my top priority". As well as being hard workers, most participants saw themselves as self-motivated in their studies. Claire exemplified this type of motivation:

... if you want to do other things like play sport or go to a friend's place, you need to motivate yourself to get things done ... it is ok to get help but you need to realise that it is you who needs to get the school work done.

Several participants regarded their own efforts as the most important factor that was helping them to achieve their goals. For example Jay, when asked if anyone or anything was helping him to attain his goal of joining to university, responded with "Just me. I'm just getting there my own way. No one else is pushing me or helping me". He was adamant that "I mostly get where I am by myself". While Jay acknowledged that being self-motivated was important to achieve at school and future educational options, he was not sure he was working at the required level: "most of the time I am just mucking up, just for fun ... I think sometime soon I will stop being stupid and start doing the right thing".

Similarly, when asked what was driving her, Emma said "I think it is most important to keep studying, keep working hard" and that "my own self-motivation is really important". Kate also rated her own efforts as the most important factor, saying, "I've got to do it myself ... I've got to study myself, no one else is going to do it for me".

6.4.2 Pragmatism

Pragmatism in this context is used to describe the extent to which participants were able to deal with changing classroom conditions and future educational aspirations. Most participants displayed a degree of pragmatism in the school environment and their future educational choices. The more pragmatic student participants were able to successfully deal with changed school conditions. They were also able to consider the possibility that they might not get into their first choice of career, and were able to consider alternatives.

Lauren highlighted a situation last year, when her Sociology class had a number of changes in the teacher taking the subject. The changes did bring about some personal frustration for Lauren, but did not adversely affect her in the long term:

My class was treated pretty bad last year in Sociology....we had two teacher changes at the start of the year ... some people were having problems trying understand some concepts but I just went to the [Tasmanian Certificate of Education] home page and downloaded the curriculum document ... It had all the important ideas.

Lauren took a pragmatic attitude towards the unfortunate school situation by taking responsibility for her learning rather than passively accepting the circumstances in which she found herself.

A number of students highlighted problems associated with group work in their subjects. In the main, students in this research felt some individuals in the group did not pull their weight in the process. Ben identified a situation where he was grouped with a number of unmotivated students:

... they were all just lazy ... I was getting angrier and angrier in the group because they didn't do anything ... eventually I ended up doing most of the work because I didn't want to get poor marks.

In a similar way, Claire recounted a situation where she was placed into a dysfunctional group but decided she needed “to take charge and gave them jobs to do”.

Most participants selected careers primarily on the basis of their interest in the field, and secondarily on the basis of their perceptions of their abilities. For example, Ben wants to be a sports journalist because he “enjoys all different types of sport” and “writing comes pretty easy”. He had initially wanted to go into medical research, but

reconsidered, as “I’m a bit squeamish with blood etc.” Claire had chosen teaching as, “It’s fun. You’re around little kids, you’re helping them learn things.” She felt that “I’m good around children, pretty good at teaching them”. Emma described the process she went through as she thought about her future:

I kind of read a lot of books about things that you know interest you — what you should go for and things like that. So I ... think about my interests and what I would like to do. And I want to do something which I find interesting, which I really want to do.

Even Claire, who was so definite that she would get into education, was pragmatic enough to explore other options. She had investigated Business courses “because I’m really good at it ... I get good marks in Maths and Economics”.

Phoebe was also considering several options. She had looked at a number of different potential educational options in the last few months. Phoebe stated that she had plans to apply to a few different universities but was unsure about the exact course for the next year. She said:

I’m stuck between two things, they’re kind of opposite each other. But I like Art and I also like the law ... because I love to debate and argue, because I do debating at school now so I think that I would be a good one. I enjoy it so much. And with Art, I like painting and ... and print making.

A few participants had not really considered alternatives to their first preference of career. However, they were often pragmatic to the extent that, if they did not achieve their aim of getting into university after Year 12, they planned to find another pathway and to keep trying until they did. Jay, for example, had plans to go to university:

At the moment I want to go to university but I don’t know what to do yet so I’m thinking I’ll try to get a good ATAR and hopefully do a English course to start off with and then wherever it takes me from there.

Jay said that going to university was “something I really want to do ... and if I don’t get it I’m just going to try other ways of getting to it”.

6.4.3 Self-efficacy

This section discusses participants’ self-efficacy beliefs about their ability to achieve in their chosen subjects and then to go on to university. This is explored in terms of how they rated their chances of gaining the necessary marks to gain entry to

the course of their choice, and in terms of how they felt they would cope with university work. The notion of agency is used to describe the extent to which participants were able to envisage themselves as successful academic students and attending university. While these are discrete theoretical constructs, there was a high degree of overlap when participants talked about their sense of agency and self-efficacy. While most student participants expressed the hope that they would successfully achieve the required results to matriculate at the end of Year 12 and to get into university courses of their choosing, levels of optimism ranged from a vague hope through to unswerving confidence.

Most participants who had close positive role models were confident they would get the marks that they needed. Kate, whose father has a Business degree, rated her chances highly. She felt her academic performance was “pretty good” and said she usually “received pretty high marks in her subjects”. Similarly, Ben whose parents both went to university, displayed high self-efficacy with regard to his schoolwork, saying, “I’m really good at it ... I got top marks at the end of last year and I’m going really well so far this year”. When asked if he had any concerns that he might not get the marks he needed, he said, “I’ll get in. Definitely”.

A small number of participants expressed concern they would not get into the university course of their choice. Claire was “really worried” she might not get the marks to get into an education degree offered by a Victorian university because “before ... the mark was a bit lower. But now you have to get in the 80s ... so I’m worried that I won’t get in”. Claire had tried to mitigate this potential problem by applying to a number of universities throughout Australia, including the University of Tasmania:

I really want to get into Monash because it has a great teaching course but you need to be realistic about these things ... it’s very competitive to get into Monash ... I have applied to lots of universities on the mainland and even UTAS ... I suppose you need to have options if things don’t work out.

Phoebe recalled a period at the start of this year, where she “wasn’t getting very good marks” in some subjects and that consequently she was “scared I might not pass in a couple of subjects at the end of the year”. This period sparked a period of consolidation in the number of subjects she was studying and playing to her academic strengths: “selecting Chemistry was not a great choice when you don’t really like science

but ... after discussing the problem ... I was able to make the right move into another pre-tertiary [subject] before it was too late”.

Jay spoke explicitly about concerns he had concerning his ability to cope with the workload at school. He considered he had the intellectual ability to achieve in a variety of subjects, but various factors such as parents, teachers and other peers were “making it hard” for him: “the teachers don’t help me ... Mum is always busy doing other stuff ... and the people in my class are annoying”. Jay was aware that getting into university was going to be difficult, but he was not going to deter him. Jay felt he could manage a university degree, saying, “I think there’d be a big workload but, if I put my mind to it, I could probably get through it”. The biggest challenge for Jay was trying to focus: “I have done some crazy shit at school ... but in the future I will take more control”.

6.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter first explored the influence of social capital, in terms of family and social connections, on the development of student’s embodied cultural capital — their knowledge of, beliefs about and aspirations for a higher education. It described a clear correlation between the levels of parental occupation and education histories — and those of other significant role models — and the student’s knowledge and beliefs. Second, it explored the impact that conversations among peers have on these characteristics, and found significant positive impact on the student participants’ knowledge, beliefs and post-secondary expectations.

In the first instance, participants whose parents had higher levels of education and/or occupation demonstrated more accurate and in-depth knowledge about university entry requirements, about the costs of university study and about the nature of university work and life. These students presented as having greater self-efficacy with regard to their ability to gain entry to university and to cope with university work. They also found it easier to envisage themselves as university students and working in their desired profession. Finally, while levels of post-secondary aspirations did not differ according to family background, participants with close positive role models expressed a stronger sense of expectation that they would make it to university. These differences appear to be the result of opportunities to experience the world of work in a

professional context and/or the world of university. Primarily, however, they reflected conversations held among those in their close social worlds.

Second, this chapter has demonstrated that conversations among peers had a significant and often powerful impact on participants' knowledge, beliefs and aspirations. This impact worked in varied ways. For some, it encouraged more effective utilisation of their existing social connections, prompting conversations around their career and study goals with parents, teachers and peers. For others, it simply increased their knowledge and corrected misconceptions around course options, entry requirements, costs and the university experience, through the provision of timely and accurate information. In many cases this had the effect of breaking down perceived barriers to entry to university. The following chapter explores the means by which school authorities could develop a theory of intervention in a secondary college to help the process of constructing beliefs about, and aspirations for a university education.

CHAPTER 7: TOWARDS A THEORY OF INTERVENTION

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this thesis was to interrogate the central proposition of the influence of characteristics of social capital in the family on the learning process of students on the Northwest of Tasmania. This question was then allied to key research questions to provide a wide locus for the investigation of the lives of senior secondary students. To this end, five research questions were proposed:

- RO1: What influence does the geographic location of the Northwest Coast of Tasmania have on the development of social capital?**
- RO2: What family mechanisms create social capital and what are the outcomes of social capital for students?**
- RO3: What social capital mechanisms influence engagement of students with the learning process?**
- RO4: How do social capital mechanisms influence the development of specific personal agency traits in students?**
- RO5: How does a student enact their subjectivity traits in the learning process?**

The goals of this research have been investigated through in-depth interviews and questionnaires with six senior secondary student participants and a social capital questionnaire completed by parents/guardians and student participants. This research has two main findings. First, that a young student's bonding social capital — specifically, the presence or absence of an academically successful role model in the family — played a significant role in shaping their embodied cultural capital through their knowledge and beliefs, agency and self-efficacy, and post-secondary expectations, *via* a complex interplay of processes.

Second, that it was possible to access bridging social capital and to intervene in the processes of the accumulation of embodied cultural capital. That is, schoolteachers and other role models could demonstrably alter the young persons' knowledge of and beliefs about post-secondary options, and their self-efficacy and agency and this, in

turn, enhanced their expectations that attending university might be a possibility for them.

7.2 THE ROLE OF BONDING SOCIAL CAPITAL IN DEVELOPING EMBODIED CULTURAL CAPITAL

This research is based on theories of social and cultural capital, as developed first by Bourdieu and Passeron (1977), Bourdieu (1986, 1988, 1990), and further developed by Coleman (1988a). Social capital here is defined as the network of social relationships that connect individuals to resources. For this thesis a distinction was drawn between bonding social capital and bridging social capital; bonding social capital refers to an individual's connections with others like themselves, and bridging social capital refers to connections to people from a diverse range of backgrounds.

Cultural capital is defined as the cultural goods transmitted by the family (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). This study is primarily concerned with cultural capital as it occurs in its embodied state; that is, as long-lasting dispositions that become an integral part of the person, referred to as 'habitus' (Bourdieu, 1986). For the purposes of this study, a young person's knowledge and beliefs about participation and achievement at school, in addition to aspects of their self-efficacy, their subjectivity, their post-secondary aspirations and expectations, have all been construed as elements of their habitus.

It was hypothesised that an individual's bonding social capital is instrumental in shaping and, in many cases, limiting their habitus. It was proposed the presence in their close social world of a significant other who has successfully gone to university, would contribute to positive habitus in young people with regard to their thinking about attending university. That is, it would help them to build a body of information on career and study options, to shape positive beliefs about the possible university experience itself, to identify with university students, and to enhance their self-efficacy with regard to their ability to gain entry to university. Ultimately, it was proposed that these factors all help to make university a realistic option for young people.

As demonstrated in Chapter 5, a young person's bonding social capital is the key influence on the construction of their knowledge and beliefs, agency and self-efficacy, and post-secondary expectations. The data showed that the workings of this influence

are multi-faceted and inter-related (See Figures 7.1 and 7.2). The key way in which a young person's close social world has been shown to operate is through family and peers acting as role models, thereby influencing the young person to construct their dispositions of self-efficacy and agency based on the education and occupation histories of those in their close social worlds.

Further, it was shown to operate through the encouragement of ambitions, and financial and other practical forms of support, which also help to shape a young person's aspirations and work ethic. Influence also is asserted through the provision of information, and through conversations in daily life, the accuracy and depth of which reflect the giver's own experience of post-secondary education and training or lack thereof. Together, these inputs work to influence the construction of a young person's habitus such that their knowledge and beliefs come to reflect or to encompass to a high degree the experiences of those in their close social worlds.

Figure 7.1 The impact of bonding social capital on knowledge of, beliefs about, and expectations for, post-secondary education: Young people from middle to high socio-economic backgrounds.

Bonding social capital

- Close family members/peers going to university



Social world provides

- Academically successful role models
- Encouragement in educational aspirations and work ethic
- Positive conversations about post-secondary education
- Accurate information about post-secondary options and job requirements
- Experience of/insight into professional work and/or university life



Embodied cultural capital

- Strong goal orientation/work ethic
- High self-efficacy regarding university entry/work
- Ability to identify self as university student
- Pragmatic with skills/resources
- High aspirations and expectations



I am likely to go university

Figure 7.2 The impact of bonding social capital on knowledge of, beliefs about, and expectations for, post-secondary education: Young people from low socio-economic backgrounds

Bonding social capital

- Close family members did not attend university/Peers not going to university



Social world provides

- Few academically successful role models
- Encouragement in aspirations and work ethic
- No positive conversations about post-secondary options such as university
- Little or inaccurate information about post-secondary education or training options
- Little experience of/insight into professional work and/or university life



Embodied cultural capital

Knowledge:

- Little/inaccurate knowledge of post-secondary options, entry requirements and costs
- Poor understanding of school/social life balance

Personal characteristics:

- Strong goal orientation/work ethic
- Low self-efficacy regarding university entry/working towards
- Difficulty envisaging self as a university student
- Pragmatic but lacking skills/resources
- High aspirations but low expectations

Beliefs about post-secondary education:

- University is unfamiliar
- University work is hard, uninteresting and theoretical
- People like me do not go to university



I am unlikely to go university

The ultimate effect of these phenomena on the students in this study was shown to be the development of knowledge and beliefs about, and expectations for, their post-secondary pathways, which generally reflected levels of education within their families. Thus, young people whose bonding social capital included people who went to university (Figure 7.1) were more likely to grow up believing that they too would go to university. Conversely, young people whose bonding social capital did not include people who went to university (Figure 7.2) were more likely to grow up believing that they were not likely to go to university.

7.3 BONDING SOCIAL CAPITAL AS ROLE MODELS

The first way in which a young person's bonding social capital was seen to operate was through family and peers acting as role models. It was proposed the presence of an academically successful role model would provide an example of what was possible and thereby increase the student's belief that they might also be able to go to university. The data supported this proposition, in that participants' self-efficacy, agency and expectations largely reflected the education and occupation histories of those in their close social worlds.

The majority of participants in this study were from low to middle socio-economic backgrounds with regard to parental occupation and level of education. There was not a direct relationship, however, between parental occupation and student participants' career aspirations. The majority of student participants aspired to a university education and a professional occupation regardless of their parents' education and work histories. Nonetheless, most of the student participants in this study were inspired in their career choices by role models in their extended families. Those who did not have relevant role models in their families looked further afield for their inspiration, to their extended families, or to figures in the media. In a few cases, role models acted as examples of 'what not to do'; these were powerful motivators.

While career aspirations were not limited by parents' occupations, there appeared to be a relationship between parental education and occupation, and the student participants' sense of agency and self-efficacy, which ultimately affected their expectations regarding their post-secondary destinations.

Almost without exception, those whose parents had a university qualification:

- had a more detailed understanding of university entry requirements and the costs of university study;
- held more accurate and detailed perceptions of university work and life;
- had higher self-efficacy with regard to their ability to gain entry to university;
- had higher self-efficacy with regard to their ability to cope with university work;
- were more able to envisage themselves as university students; and ultimately
- had higher expectations that they would go to university.

This particular finding is, as acknowledged, based on a small sample; however the pattern indicates further research of differing populations would be valuable.

This relationship operated through two key mechanisms. First, participants with family members in professional occupations had opportunities to observe them in their work. For example, Lauren had visited her relatives in their pharmacy, Kate had visited her CEO father's office, Phoebe had worked in her father's office and Claire had spent some time at the school where her aunt taught. These generally positive experiences motivated participants, helped to familiarise them with and to feel comfortable in the professional world, and encouraged them to envisage themselves in similar roles. The second mechanism was that of conversations in the family about family members' experiences of university, which the young people had often been participants or observers. The nature and impact of these is explored in Section 7.5.

Bourdieu (1996) proposed there is a critical mass of bonding social capital, such that when a large enough proportion of a person's bonding social capital make the transition to university, or holds similar ambitions, going to university comes to be seen as not unusual, which encourages young people to consider university as an option. The data support this general conclusion, as the young people in this study were more likely to construct their agency as university student or as professional when there were a number of academically successful role models in their close social worlds.

Further, this group were more likely to develop high self-efficacy with regard to their ability to gain entry to university and to cope with university work. These factors

enhance their expectation that they might go to university. Conversely, for young people from low socio-economic backgrounds, the dearth of academically successful role models within their bonding social capital reduces their capacity to construct their agency as university students. It also may lead to the development of low self-efficacy with regard to their beliefs in their ability to gain entry to university and to cope with the university work all of which, in turn, reduce their expectations that they might go to university.

7.4 BONDING SOCIAL CAPITAL AS SOURCE OF SUPPORT

Another way in which the student participants' bonding social capital was shown to operate was through the provision of support, from personal encouragement of ambitions to assistance with homework and financial and other practical forms of support. These forms of support were seen to enhance the student participants' self-efficacy and to help to shape and to encourage their work ethic and aspirations.

There was no relationship between parents' levels of education and the personal encouragement they gave their daughters' and sons' ambitions, as four of the six student participants' rated their parents as the most important source of support regardless of parents' education histories. Personal encouragement from parents acted as a motivator and, in some cases, enhanced the young person's self-efficacy with regard to their perceived ability to achieve their goals. In addition to encouraging their daughters' and sons' aspirations, many parents encouraged them to work hard to achieve their goals, which generally had a motivating effect. In two cases (Emma and Kate) this support was manifested as pressure to perform.

Parental support often took more practical forms, the most common being assistance with homework. In this area, there was a clear relationship between parental levels of education and the nature and degree of assistance they were able to provide. While most parents monitored their daughters' and sons' homework, those who had attained higher levels of education were more able to provide specific assistance such as proofreading assignments or helping with computer tasks. This had the effect of enhancing the young people's self-efficacy with regard to their academic ability. It is also highly likely that such focused assistance, sometimes extending to arranging

tutoring, improved young people's academic results, though evidence for this is beyond the boundaries of this study.

Another form of practical intervention from parents was when some accompanied their daughters or sons to university, either for informal visits or for Open Days. Again, this was closely related to parents' levels of education and, with one exception, occurred only when the parent had been to, or was currently studying at, university. Young people who had visited a university campus generally held more detailed perceptions of university work and life, felt more comfortable and less daunted in the university environment, and were more readily able to envisage themselves as university students.

In addition to family members, the young people reported their peers as important sources of support for their aspirations. While only three of the six student participants reported having friends or siblings who shared their aspirations for higher education, those who did found it encouraging. Conversely, some participants such as Jay reported that their friends actively discouraged them from their goal to go to university. While being in a minority did not act as an explicit deterrent to any participant, there was nonetheless an observable absence of the encouraging effect of having close peers who held similar ambitions with whom to share aspirations and plans.

In summary, parents generally encouraged student participants' ambitions, irrespective of their own experiences of education. However, there was a clear relationship between parents' levels of education and the nature of support they were able to provide their children, which resulted in differences in the young people's self-efficacy and ability to envisage themselves as university students. Peers were less likely to encourage aspirations for university unless they shared the aspiration. This had a slight discouraging effect.

7.5 BONDING SOCIAL CAPITAL PROVIDING FINANCIAL SUPPORT

While student participants generally reported their parents were prepared to support them financially while they studied at university, Jay and Claire reported feeling concerned that their parents would not be able to afford the tuition fees and costs of

living away from home. Both were ignorant of the HECS system of deferred repayment and were under the impression they would need to pay tuition fees upfront. Neither had close family members who had studied at university in Australia, and each expressed the belief that the cost of study might prevent them from going to university.

This indicates a heightened sense of barrier to entry among those from low socio-economic backgrounds who have few or no people in their close social worlds to share their experiences and provide a more accurate understanding of the fee payment system in Australia. This highlights the role played by close family members as a source of information, and reinforces the importance of ‘everyday’ conversations in shaping young people’s knowledge and beliefs.

7.6 BONDING SOCIAL CAPITAL PROVIDING CONVERSATIONS AND INFORMATION

Another important means by which student participants’ bonding social capital influenced their embodied cultural capital was through the provision of information, and through conversations in daily life, the accuracy and depth of which reflected the giver’s own experience of higher education or lack thereof. This worked to shape the young people’s habitus such that their knowledge, beliefs, self-efficacy and expectations closely reflected the experiences of those in their social worlds.

The small proportion of participants who came from families where one or more members had gone to university, such as Kate and Emma, reported taking part in conversations about university life and work. These participants demonstrated a more accurate knowledge of university entry requirements and processes. Several other participants reported gaining useful information from their teachers or from another person working in the field they hoped to enter. Hearing people close to themselves talking about their experiences of university built more detailed pictures of university life and developed the sense that “people like me go to university”. This enabled the young people to envisage themselves there and raised their expectations that they too would go to university.

Participants without access to academically successful role models reported either no conversations, or conversations of a different nature. These conversations tended to paint university as difficult to get into, large and unfriendly, and university

work as hard. These young people often held vague or inaccurate knowledge of entry requirements. They displayed beliefs that university was large and daunting, the work was hard and uninteresting, and that “people like me” did not go there. The absence of positive conversations made it hard for these young people to envisage themselves at university, while the negative conversations led to low self-efficacy with regard to university entry. These factors lowered their expectations that they would be able to go to university themselves.

A clear distinction between aspirations and expectations emerged from the data. The majority of student participants aspired to go to university. There was an observable relationship between parental levels of education and the expectations held by the young people with regard to where they felt most likely to go after completing school. Those whose parents possessed a university qualification had considerably higher expectations of their post-school career. This phenomenon has been identified before (James, 2002) and data from this study support both the distinction between aspirations and expectations, and the relationship between parental levels of education and young people’s post-secondary expectations.

7.7 THE IMPACT OF BONDING SOCIAL CAPITAL ON EMBODIED CULTURAL CAPITAL SUMMARISED

The education and employment experiences of a student participant’s bonding social capital have a profound effect on their embodied cultural capital (Figure 7.1). There was a clear encouraging effect evident from having family members who had gone to university. Through acting as role models, these family members provided inspiration and enhanced self-efficacy and agency. Through everyday conversations, they provided accurate knowledge and built positive beliefs about university. Consequently, these young people developed higher expectations that they would go to university.

Those without access to academically successful role models experienced an absence of these encouraging effects and exhibited a stronger sense of barriers to their entry to university (Figure 7.2). Without ready access to such role models, they often developed little or no knowledge of university entry requirements, and negative perceptions of university work and the university environment. This led to the

development of a gap between their post-secondary aspirations and their expectations that they might go to university. The next section of this chapter explains the ways in which a variety of bridging social capital interactions and activities were able to improve this knowledge, alter these beliefs and raise the expectations which the young people developed in their social worlds, such that university came to be viewed as more relevant, desirable and attainable.

Ben, Lauren and Claire spoke about teachers helping to improve their knowledge of university entry requirements including subject pre-requisites and required TCE scores. Jay spoke about how one teacher provided him with a clear understanding of the subject and general entry requirements for university. Some student participants stated teachers in general raised their awareness of the range of post-secondary options available to them.

The information that had a significant impact on participants' post-secondary expectations was that concerning the HECS system of deferred repayment of fees and general accommodation costs. Several student participants reported they had initially believed they would have to pay fees upfront, and therefore believed they would place a considerable burden on their families if they went to university. These participants all reported that learning of HECS came as a relief to them and their parents, and thereby removed a perceived barrier.

In addition to providing information, there is evidence that conversations with teachers promoted a dialogue between some participants and their friends, other teachers and parents. For Claire, undertaking goal-setting activity in a pathways class prompted a conversation with her parents about her going to university. For Lauren, a conversation with her English teacher about her educational future prompted a conversation with her parents about career and study aspirations. In this way, the teachers and other role models possibly had a slight influence on student participants' bonding social capital such that they also became better informed, more positive and more able to assist the young people.

Teachers and other role models not only informed, but also enhanced, participants' beliefs about the desirability and relevance of a university education. A majority of participants demonstrated positive perceptions, with a significant

proportion more positive in their belief that university would provide the most career options, would lead to a more satisfying and lucrative career and would develop the skills they required for their chosen careers. They also demonstrated enhanced perceptions of its desirability, and were more positive that university would be the most interesting and challenging alternative.

The primary way in which teachers and university role models improved student participants' embodied cultural capital was through opportunities to understand university life. Many interview participants reported they had a basic idea of what university might be like. Several others said that they had gleaned what notions they had from television and movies. Five of the six student participants initially imagined university as a large, unfriendly, and generally frightening place. Others had seen university study as uninteresting, teacher-centred, predominantly theoretical, comprising mainly reading and writing, and generally too hard for them.

A common theme was that teachers provided a real-life experience of a university environment. Consequently, five of the six student participants developed a more detailed picture of university work and more positive perceptions of the university experience. Through these experiences, some participants such as Claire, Kate and Lauren realised university is filled with people not unlike themselves. Others such as Jay came to realise that it could be enjoyable, practical and varied in its approach. This was both informative and motivating. While recognising that university study is nonetheless demanding, many came to view it as manageable. This broke down the initial, commonly held perception that university work would be too hard.

In addition to acquiring an understanding of university life through teachers, many participants found interaction with role models who were able to provide a student's perspective, encouraging. As Kate explained, the information was more meaningful coming from the role models because "they're the ones who are actually doing it". It appears the information was rendered more accessible by virtue of coming from "actual students." Interaction with the role models also had a powerful impact on the young people's agency and self-efficacy, which is explored in Section 7.9.

7.8 CHANGING PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS: GOAL ORIENTATION, WORK ETHIC AND PRAGMATISM

The majority of participants were already highly motivated and several, such as Lauren, Claire, Ben and Kate, felt that their own motivation was the most important factor helping them to attain their goals. There was little evidence of any significant change in this respect after interactions with teachers. Only Jay identified himself as not working as hard as he was required, to achieve university enrolment. This sample is too small to make a judgement about the impact of teachers on work ethic among less motivated young people.

Most interview participants applied a pragmatic approach to their career choices, in that they generally gave consideration to their interests and perceived abilities. However, only a few students such as Emma and Ben were pragmatic to the extent that they had considered alternatives in the event that they did not make it into their first choice of course or occupation. The data suggest that discussions with teachers influenced a number of student participants to adopt a more pragmatic approach, in that they undertook further research into their post-secondary alternatives. This process worked primarily through the provision of information that presented a wide range of career choices and alternative training pathways and prompted them to explore further.

7.9 CHANGING PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS: SELF-EFFICACY AND AGENCY.

The most powerful effect observed was on participants' self-efficacy and agency. A majority of student participants reported that after undertaking conversations and pathways planning they had an enhanced belief in their ability to gain entry to university and in their ability to cope with university work. In addition, four of the six student participants demonstrated an improved ability to envisage themselves as university students. This operated in part through the provision of information, with many participants finding it helpful hearing from someone who had an accurate idea of university entry requirements and costs. Most powerful, however, was the impact of the university student role models *via* the pathways planning process. Interacting with "people like me" who were successfully undertaking university study enriched student

participants' self-efficacy with regard to their ability to gain entry to university and to cope with university study.

This trend was supported in the interview data, where some participants such as Jay, Claire and Lauren reported being initially concerned that they would not get the marks they needed to get into their desired university course. After undertaking conversations with university role models through the pathways planning process this anxiety was reduced for each of these student participants. This effect was particularly marked and important for those without academically successful role models in the home. Those with access to successful role models such as Ben, Kate and Emma, were already quite confident that they would gain entry to university.

The results of interacting with university role models were similar, although less marked, for self-efficacy with regard to student participants' belief in their ability to cope with the work. Initially, Jay, who did not have good access to relevant role models, reported believing the work would be "too hard" to get into university. However, later in the interview he said that after interacting with the university role models felt he would "probably get through it."

These changes came about through several interconnected means. For some, the provision of information around university entry requirements and alternative pathways was helpful. In general, however, the provision of information alone did not have a significant impact on self-efficacy with the exception of information about HECS. One of the most powerful ways in which the bridging social capital brought about changes was through interaction with university role models. Meeting other young people from similar backgrounds, who had successfully made the transition to university, provided a living example of what could be achieved by someone "like me". It appears from the data that Jay and Claire benefited the most from meeting the university role models during their senior secondary pathways classes, through building their confidence that they too "can do it".

Experiencing university life and work, either through a visit to the Cradle Coast Campus or anecdotally through engagement with teachers and other role models, was a powerful means by which bridging social capital enhanced a number of student participants' belief in their abilities. After spending some time speaking to their teachers

and other role models, several students reported feeling that they “could possibly go to university in the future”. This operated both through interaction with teachers and university role models, who demonstrated it could be done and through experiencing actual university classes, and which demonstrated the work was achievable.

The most significant contribution of bridging social capital offered by teachers and other role models was a greater interest of student participants’ in their self-efficiency. These findings were supported by interview data, where a number of student participants who had limited or no access to academically successful role models reported initially finding it difficult to envisage themselves as university students. For these students, discussions with their teachers and meeting university students from a similar background to their own was a powerful demonstration of what was possible. Jay said that meeting people who had a similar background to him had an impact. He discovered that university students were “normal ... just like me”. Emma believed a conversation with her English teacher, where she discovered that he was someone “from a farming background and not wealthy”, reinforced her belief that she could achieve the goal of attending university.

7.10 CHANGING ASPIRATIONS AND EXPECTATIONS

The aspirations of the student participants in this study were not constrained by the absence of a role model in their family, as a majority of them aspired to attend higher education and professional careers regardless of their parents’ occupation. Thus, while it appears that bridging social capital in its variety of forms raised career aspirations for a few participants, overall it did not significantly raise their already high career aspirations. It did, however, raise overall aspirations for university, while also significantly raising expectations. It appears that bridging social capital narrowed the gap between participants’ career aspirations and their expectations that they would enter higher education after completing secondary schooling.

The raising of aspirations and expectations was brought about through a number of inter-related bridging social capital mechanisms. First, it operated through providing information about career opportunities. Second, it worked through providing opportunities to experience university life and work. Third, it operated through

interactions with teachers and university student role models. These combined to enhance knowledge, beliefs, self-efficacy and agency, which in turn raised expectations.

Through the provision of information, along with the opportunities and guidance to explore post-secondary options, bridging social capital raised student participants' awareness of the range of career opportunities available to them. This led many to think about their future career aspirations, although this did not lead to an overall increase in the levels of career that the young people aspired to undertake in the future. The interview data provided a number of examples where student participants reported the information received from their teachers and other role models raised personal aspirations and expectations.

As discussed earlier, the removal of the barrier of financial concerns, through providing information about HECS for example, raised the expectations of several interview student participants. Others spoke about the impact that information about entry requirements had on their self-efficacy with regard to university entry, and in turn on their expectations.

The interview data also illuminated the impact of experiences of university life and work. For Kate, Claire and Lauren, becoming more familiar with the university environment helped make it a less daunting future prospect. Student participants such as Emma and Phoebe were motivated by a glimpse of university life, which demonstrated it could be both interesting and achievable.

This effect was most powerful for Jay who reported undertaking activities defined as bridging social capital enhanced his self-efficacy with regard to his ability to cope with university work, which raised his expectations that he could and would go to university.

Once again, a powerful impact observed was that of the interaction between students and their teachers. As discussed in Section 7.9 on self-efficacy and agency, seeing and talking to others who they perceived to be like themselves enhanced participants' belief in their ability to gain entry to university and to cope with university work, and enabled them to envisage themselves at university. This effect was

particularly important for those who did not have access to academically successful role models in their close social worlds.

In all, the combination of information, experience of university and interaction with role models informed and motivated, removed perceived barriers, and enhanced self-efficacy and agency. These effects combined to raise student participants' aspirations for higher education and, more significantly, to raise their expectations that they could and would go to university.

For a majority of the student participants, however, it was not one element, which affected their self-efficiency and agency. Rather, it was the combination of access to accurate information, some experience of university life and interaction with role models, which worked together to build their confidence in their abilities. Their enhanced self-efficacy and agency made all the difference for many participants. For example, Claire reported she had considered going to university but these bridging social capital interactions helped to reinforce this course of future personal action.

7.11 AN EMERGING THEORY

The construction of a young person's habitus has been shown to be a constantly evolving and complex process, shaped by a myriad of influences in their social worlds. Social media in the future will stand out as a more central area where attitudes will be formed and where individuals meet 'the other' and hence forms an outlook on themselves and on the world. Analysis of the data from this study indicates a young person's bonding social capital is instrumental in shaping their embodied cultural capital in terms of their knowledge of, beliefs about and aspirations for university. However, the data supports the notion that this embodied cultural capital is not fixed and that it is possible, through structured and unstructured interactions, to intervene in the process of the acquisition of a young person's habitus. The majority of the participants in this study came from low to middle socio-economic backgrounds in terms of parental occupations and levels of education, such that their bonding social capital was generally lacking in academically successful role models. Consequently (see also Figure 7.2), their embodied cultural capital generally included:

Knowledge:

- Little or inaccurate knowledge of post-secondary options, university entry requirements and the costs of university study; and
- Little understanding of / misconceptions around university life and work.

Personal characteristics:

- Strong goal orientation and work ethic;
- Moderate pragmatism but lacking the required skills and/or resources;
- Low self-efficacy with regard to their ability to gain entry to university and to cope with university work; and
- Difficulty identifying themselves as university students.

Beliefs about university:

- Belief that university is alien: big, unfriendly and daunting;
- Belief that university work is hard, uninteresting and predominantly theoretical;
- High career and study aspirations but low expectations for university entry; and
- Belief that people like me don't go to university; leading to the belief that I am not likely to go to university.

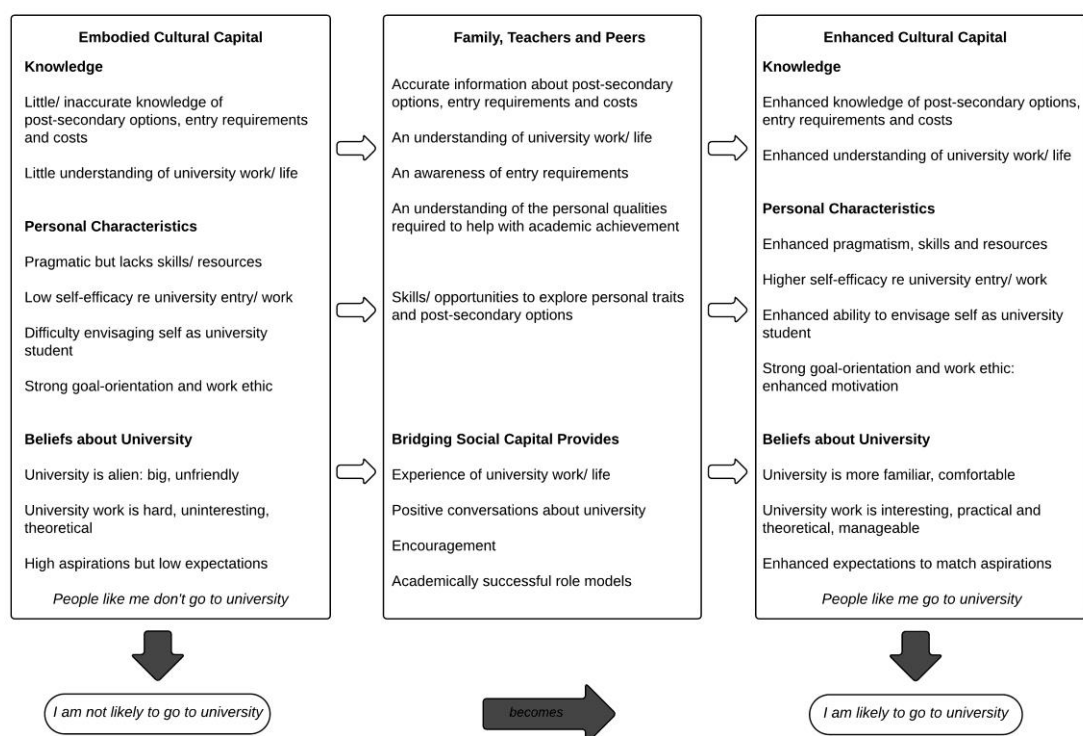
Although the majority of participants had high aspirations that included expectation that they would go to university, for a number of student participants bridging social capital was vital. Without bridging social capital, the consequence may well have been that a small number of these student participants' would gradually have lowered their expectations and followed more closely the career paths of those in their close social worlds.

For a significant number of the student participants, bridging social capital has materially enhanced their knowledge of, beliefs about and expectations for university. Figure 7.3 illustrates the proposed model, which has emerged from this study. In changing the student habitus, bridging social capital operated in a number of ways. Through the straightforward provision of accurate information, it filled gaps in knowledge and corrected misconceptions around post-secondary alternatives, university entry requirements and the costs of university study.

Through the experience of the world of university, it developed more accurate and detailed perceptions of university work and life, and helped young people to feel more at home in the environment. Through their interaction with bridging social capital in the form of teachers and university student role models, participants' self-efficacy and their ability to identify themselves as future university students were enhanced. In

combination, these elements encouraged student participants' aspirations and enhanced their expectations that they might go to university.

Figure 7.3 Proposed Model of Intervention



The theory of the acquisition of embodied capital, and the processes by which it may be altered, as outlined in this chapter, suggest that school-based activities incorporating the following features would likely have a positive impact on young people's knowledge and beliefs, self-efficacy and agency, beliefs about university and aspirations and expectations for university. Such a model would:

- **Be based on on-going partnerships between the university and school/s with historically low rates of transition to university,**
 - to establish on-going relationships with the young people, such that they come to recognise and relate to people from university as part of their world, as opposed to someone 'other' or alien; and
 - to re-visit schools regularly to cater to young people's constantly changing goals.
- **Involve teachers working closely with students to identify future educational goals,**
 - and the school-based activities should be viewed as a partnership in which all parties work together towards a common goal;

- so that teachers' knowledge of, and accessibility to, the students is valued and utilised; and
- to integrate elements of bridging social capital into on-going school curricula.
- **Commence early in secondary schooling,**
 - in order to plant the seeds of planning for the future, and the idea that university is a possibility, before negative perceptions become entrenched; and
 - to enhance habitus before critical educational decisions are made.
- **Encourage young people to aim high and to work to achieve their goals,**
 - by providing information about the range of career opportunities available and the post-secondary training options;
 - by emphasising a 'you can do it' message; and
 - so that aspirations drive work ethic and academic success, as opposed to academic results limiting aspirations.
- **Involve families, particularly parents,**
 - to value parental influence and encourage parental support of young people's aspirations; and
 - by providing accurate information to parents — for example, regarding the HECS system of payment — in order to correct misconceptions at the source before they present as barriers to university entry.
- **Provide accurate, timely information about post-secondary options, entry requirements and costs,**
 - to correct misconceptions, particularly with regard to university entry requirements and the costs of going to university, before inaccurate and negative beliefs become entrenched and present as a barrier to entry; and
 - to encourage realistic goal-setting and pragmatic decision-making.
- **Provide young people with the skills and resources needed to undertake independent research into post-secondary alternatives in their area of interest,**
 - to encourage the development of a pragmatic approach to goal-setting and decision-making.
- **Initiate interaction with currently enrolled university student role models from similar backgrounds to the school students,**
 - to provide examples of what can be achieved;
 - to enhance self-efficacy and encourage the belief that they, too, can go to university; and
 - to encourage the development of young people's sense of agency such that they can more readily envisage themselves as university students.
- **Initiate positive conversations about university life and work,**

- to fill a gap that may be missing in young people's social worlds; and
- to encourage the development of positive beliefs about university.
- **Provide opportunities to experience the 'real world' of university,**
 - to build accurate and positive perceptions of university work and life;
 - to enhance self-efficacy with regard to young people's beliefs in their ability to cope with university work; and
 - to enhance agency such that young people recognise that "people like me" can and do go to university.

This model has implications for schools, for universities and for federal student equity policy and funding. These implications are outlined in Chapter 8.

7.12 CONCLUSION

Chapters 5 to 7 have explored the role played by a young person's bonding and bridging social capital in the development of their embodied cultural capital, and have begun to develop an understanding of the means by which it is possible to mediate in these processes. It has been demonstrated a young people's bonding social capital plays a significant role in shaping their embodied cultural capital with regard to their knowledge of, beliefs about, and aspirations for higher education, through a number of inter-related means. It has also been demonstrated that bridging social capital can enhance the young people's knowledge of and beliefs about university, and their self-efficacy and agency, which in turn enhanced their expectations that they might go to university.

The means by which the bridging social capital brought about these changes were shown to be multiple and interconnected. They include the provision of accurate information, experience of university, and interaction with role models who come from backgrounds similar to the school students. In these ways, teachers and university role models have been shown to enhance the young people's bridging social capital and, through this and other means, to alter their embodied cultural capital. Ultimately, a model for student change has been proposed, based on using bridging social capital to enhance habitus. The implications for equity policy and practice are significant, and these are explored in Chapter 8.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

8.1 INTRODUCTION

This study investigated the influence of characteristics of social capital in the family unit on the learning process of students in the Northwest of Tasmania with regard to student academic aspirations and achievement. The thesis developed a framework based on theories of social and cultural capital on which to interrogate two central propositions. First, it was proposed a young person's bonding social capital plays a significant role in shaping and, in many cases, limiting their embodied cultural capital with respect to their beliefs about university. Second, it was proposed it is possible to intervene in the processes of the accumulation of social and cultural capital and thereby to raise expectations.

8.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The central findings of this study have largely supported the following two propositions. First, young people's habitus with regard to their knowledge of, beliefs about and expectations of educational achievement, participation and future aspirations was primarily shaped by the information, beliefs and identities to which they were exposed in their everyday social worlds. This set of embodied cultural capital, in turn, reflected the educational experiences of the role models themselves.

Consequently, those young people whose close family members had not attended university displayed less positive habitus with regard to university. That is, they were less knowledgeable about their post-secondary alternatives and university entry requirements and often held misconceptions about the costs. In the absence of personal or second-hand experience of the world of university, many expressed inaccurate or negative perceptions of university work and life.

However, those from families with lower levels of education generally held weak self-efficacy beliefs with regard to their ability to gain entry to university and to cope with university work. In the absence of academically successful role models, they often found it difficult to envisage themselves as university students. These effects compounded so that the young people from these backgrounds, their high career

aspirations notwithstanding, exhibited low expectations that they might be able to go to university.

Second, the construction of a young person's habitus was a dynamic, constantly evolving process and it was possible to intervene in this process to enhance bridging social capital and embodied cultural capital. Interactions and activity-based activities with teacher and university role models helped alter participants' disposition in the areas of their academic participation and achievement, their knowledge of university and their beliefs about the desirability, relevance and attainability of a university education. Such interactions also enhanced their self-efficacy beliefs around university, and the ability to identify themselves as university students, which in turn raised their expectations that they might go to university.

The data presented in Chapters 4 and 5 illustrate the ways in which these phenomena operated were multiple and inter-connected. Access and interaction with a variety of academically successful role models, presentation of accurate information and experience of university life all had an encouraging effect on young people. The provision of accurate information enhanced student participants' knowledge of their post-secondary options and university entry requirements. In addition, it corrected the misconceptions some young people held around the costs of a university education, thereby removing a significant perceived barrier to entry.

Opportunities to visit the Cradle Coast Campus of the University of Tasmania and to experience university work made university seem more welcoming and attainable, and enhanced self-esteem with regard to participants' belief in their ability to cope with work. Finally, interaction with university students from backgrounds similar to their own enhanced participants' self-esteem with regard to their ability to gain entry to university and enabled the young people to envisage themselves as university students. The combined effect was that the young people developed higher expectations that they might be able to go to university.

In the light of these findings, a model for intervention was developed, based on:

- a) ongoing partnerships between families, schools and universities;
- b) early intervention;
- c) provision of accurate information;

- d) interaction with university students from backgrounds similar to the young people; and
- e) opportunities to experience university work and life.

These findings are potentially highly valuable for families, schools and universities to help shape student engagement with higher education on the Northwest Coast of Tasmania. Further, they may inform wider student equity policy in higher education. They have also indicated a number of areas for potential future research. This chapter outlines the implications of these findings for federal policy, institutional practice and research.

8.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

As with much qualitative research, this study is in-depth rather than large in scale, which must necessarily impact on the transferability of the findings. The findings are not intended to be automatically generalisable to wider populations, nor should they be viewed as representative of all school students from low socio-economic backgrounds. Nonetheless, the findings do shed light on the accumulation of bridging social and embodied cultural capital and on the potential for intervention in these processes. Thus, they inform the design of intervention projects aimed at improving rates of transition to higher education for people from disadvantaged backgrounds.

One limitation with regard to the transferability of the findings is that the campus visit took place on a particular campus that is small in comparison with most metropolitan universities, and therefore likely to be experienced as both physically less daunting and socially more welcoming than its larger counterparts. It appears the ability to make young people feel comfortable on the campus may be aided by the nature of the campus. This effect may not be present if similar visits are employed at larger university campuses. In such cases, it would be important to find ways to mitigate any potential negative effects from the size of the campus and student body.

A final, but important, limitation is that this research focused only on the short-term beliefs of young people's knowledge, beliefs and aspirations. Only anecdotal evidence has been made to ascertain the success of student beliefs into actual transition to university among participants. This would be an important area for further study.

8.4 IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY FOR EQUITY OF ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

The Australian (Federal) Government has targeted equity of access for students from low socio-economic groups as an area of priority in its aim to increase the proportion of the population participating in higher education. This is viewed as important on moral grounds — so that all Australians should have equal access to the personal, social and financial benefits of a higher education, regardless of socio-economic background; and on economic grounds — to enhance national productivity through a more highly educated workforce. After two decades of policy support and institutional interventions, it is widely believed it is timely to evaluate the efficacy of the targeted approach. There is an oft-cited need for more research in this area, and this study contributes to this field.

Attitudes towards education have been identified as the primary influence on young people's academic success, and this research develops our understanding of the processes by which young people construct their habitus with regard to higher education. Further, it illuminates ways in which it might be possible to improve rates of transition to higher education among people from rural and regional low socio-economic backgrounds by altering this habitus and raising expectations.

8.5 IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY

The findings of this study contribute to Australian Government policy and practice in achieving the government's target to increase the rate of participation in higher education of people from low socio-economic backgrounds to 20% of university populations by the year 2020. The Australian Government has invested significant sums in initiatives aimed at improving participation levels of students from under-represented groups (Bradley, 2008). Evidence that the intervention has been effective in changing the beliefs held by young people from low socio-economic backgrounds about higher education suggests that the government should continue funding such equity initiatives. The findings of this study will potentially inform the allocation and impact of these investments through,

- identification of the factors affecting knowledge of, beliefs about and aspirations and expectations for higher education among young people from rural and regional low socio-economic backgrounds; and
- development of a an evidence-based model for intervention, to enhance knowledge, change beliefs and thereby raise aspirations and expectations for higher education among young people from low socio-economic backgrounds.

The absence of evidence around transition rates suggests that there is also a need to fund further research, particularly longitudinal studies, on the efficacy and outcomes of such intervention programs. This is explored further in Section 8.7. There is also recognition of opportunities for positive intervention in the upper grades of primary school. This is acknowledged as a highly feasible proposal; however, first, the researcher is a secondary school teacher, and has undertaken an investigation in his field of expertise. Second, this proposal for positive intervention in the upper grades of primary school is beyond the scope of this thesis, and would be an excellent opportunity for further research.

8.6 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRACTICE AT HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

The current social, economic and political climate strengthens the imperative for higher education institutions to act to address persistent inequities in participation. The findings from this study contribute to an evidence-base that can inform higher education institutions as they develop intervention programs.

Clearly, the students' social context must be taken into account when designing an intervention program. Both the literature and the data in this study highlight the key role parents play in shaping a young person's knowledge, beliefs, self-efficacy, agency, and their aspirations and expectations. Therefore, an intervention is likely to be more effective if it can find ways in which to engage parents.

In the absence of academically successful role models in the lives of school students from disadvantaged backgrounds, the part played by university student role models takes on greater significance. In these contexts, it is imperative that an intervention provides opportunities for interaction with university students from similar

backgrounds to the school students, in order to fill the gap in the students' existing social world.

Finally, universities must consider whether their responsibilities extend beyond raising aspirations. Convincing vulnerable young people that a university education is attainable can be misleading, and potentially devastating, to those who aspire and miss out. It is recommended that universities put in place strategies to facilitate the transition to university of those whose expectations have been raised through participation in intervention programs. Such strategies might include, for example, alternative access routes, differential entry scores, enabling courses and financial assistance.

Altering the way universities are perceived — making them seem more relevant and attainable — implies changing not only perceptions but also actualities. Improved participation rates raise implications for university support structures and pedagogies. There will be a need to implement strategies that facilitate the engagement, retention and success of the growing proportion of the student body that will be from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds. These strategies might include academic assistance, advice on financial concerns, mentoring of first-year students and structured social activities. In addition, universities will need to develop pedagogies that engage, rather than exclude, people from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds.

Finally, there is an imperative for higher education institutions to conduct their own, site-specific, research into transition rates and engagement, including retention and success, among participating cohorts.

8.7 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCHOOLS

Many participants in this study reported that the information provided by their teachers was important to them. For some, this information was transformative. This indicates a need for schools to spend more time on goal-setting and guided career planning to develop students' knowledge of post-secondary alternatives, to encourage pragmatic decision-making and to ensure that university is presented as a viable destination. The dynamic nature of the construction of young people's habitus suggests

it would be beneficial for schools to provide regular opportunities for students to re-visit these concepts to accommodate their constantly evolving plans.

This study has highlighted the powerful impact that interaction with teachers and university students had on those young people who had little access to such role models in their existing social worlds. Schools have a role to play in enhancing the bridging social capital of their students. In addition to working in partnership with universities to provide opportunities for students to interact with university students, it is recommended schools exploit the potential bridging social capital within their own communities. One way to do this is to use past students who have gone to university as a resource and as role models for students.

Another powerful impact observed was that of experiencing the world of university. Again, schools have an important role in informing all students of opportunities to visit universities, in promoting events such as University Open Days and 'taster' days, and in facilitating these visits. The data also indicated many students held some significant misconceptions around the costs of a university education. It is recommended schools ensure all students are informed of the structure of the HECS payment system, not just the select few who teachers deem likely to go to university. This should be done so that no student precludes university as an option, due to misconceptions about the costs of a higher education.

The data around the perceived helpfulness of teachers and the impact of teacher encouragement and expectations highlight the important role that teachers play in influencing young people's career and study choices. Teachers should therefore communicate high expectations of all students and encourage all students to aim high, so that aspirations and expectations drive achievement rather than achievement being limited by low aspirations and expectations.

Finally, the data highlighted the primacy of parents in shaping their children's habitus, which suggests that any proposed intervention for rural and regional students would be more effective if it engaged parents. Schools are in a key position to gain access to parents, and it is therefore recommended they develop strategies to inform and involve parents in all of the above processes. Strategies might include informing parents of upcoming opportunities for their daughters and sons to visit universities and,

where relevant, reassurance that the young people will be well supervised. Schools could consider providing a shuttle service to University Open Days, or providing funding to cover transport costs.

At information evenings dealing with careers information and school subject choice, the option of going to university should be presented as a realistic and achievable alternative for students from their school. Schools could also distribute information to parents. In particular, schools could endeavour to inform all parents about the structure of the HECS to prevent parents discouraging their daughters and sons due to misplaced concerns about the costs of going to university.

8.8 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This thesis contributes to the growing body of research, which provides evidence of the impact of intervention models on the post-secondary choices and destinations of young people from disadvantaged rural and regional backgrounds. However, it is small in scope and site-specific in nature. It would therefore be beneficial for universities and schools to conduct, or continue to conduct, research into the efficacy and impact of their intervention models, in order to establish whether the effects observed in this study are consistent across other contexts and groups. Where such evaluations have already taken place, it is recommended the results be published in order to build a shared understanding of the factors that encourage transition to university.

Second, this research provides evidence it is possible to change young people's knowledge, beliefs and expectations; it has not quantified the success of the intervention. There is a need for further research to ascertain the impact on actual transition rates among cohorts participating in this and other similar intervention programs.

Third, this study focused only on students from backgrounds in outer metropolitan areas. It has not explored issues of compounded disadvantage, such as the added dimension of rural and isolated students, or Indigenous students. There is need for further research to examine the extent to which the findings from this study might offer insight into their circumstances.

8.9 CONCLUSION

The Australian Government has set a target that, by 2020, people from low socio-economic backgrounds will make up 20% of university populations. Consecutive DEEWR (Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations) statistics have illustrated that people from low socio-economic backgrounds attend university at a fraction of the rate of those from high socio-economic backgrounds, and this has remained the case despite decades of policy promoting equity of access. While a number of factors contribute to this imbalance, several studies have highlighted the primacy of family attitudes to higher education in determining post-secondary destinations. Using theories of social and cultural capital as a framework, this study investigated the potential for altering young people's existing disposition in the areas of their knowledge and beliefs about, and aspirations and expectations for, higher education.

Within the constraints of a small study, it has been demonstrated it is possible to alter young people's beliefs about and expectations for university. A model of a school-university intervention that involves the provision of accurate information, interaction with academically successful role models and experiences of the world of university has the potential to remove perceived barriers to entry and thereby to make university seem more accessible. In particular, interaction with teachers and university students who are 'like' them encouraged school students to perceive university as both relevant and attainable.

Australian Government policy currently promotes and funds access and equity projects involving sustained linkages between schools and universities. The findings from this study suggest that these projects should involve early intervention, on-going partnerships, the provision of timely and accurate information, experiences of the world of university and interaction with academically successful role models from similar backgrounds to the school students. This research indicates such a model can have a powerful impact on school students' knowledge and beliefs about, and raise expectations for, further education. At its most successful, this will make a significant contribution towards the long-term agenda of a more equitable distribution of the benefits of higher education.

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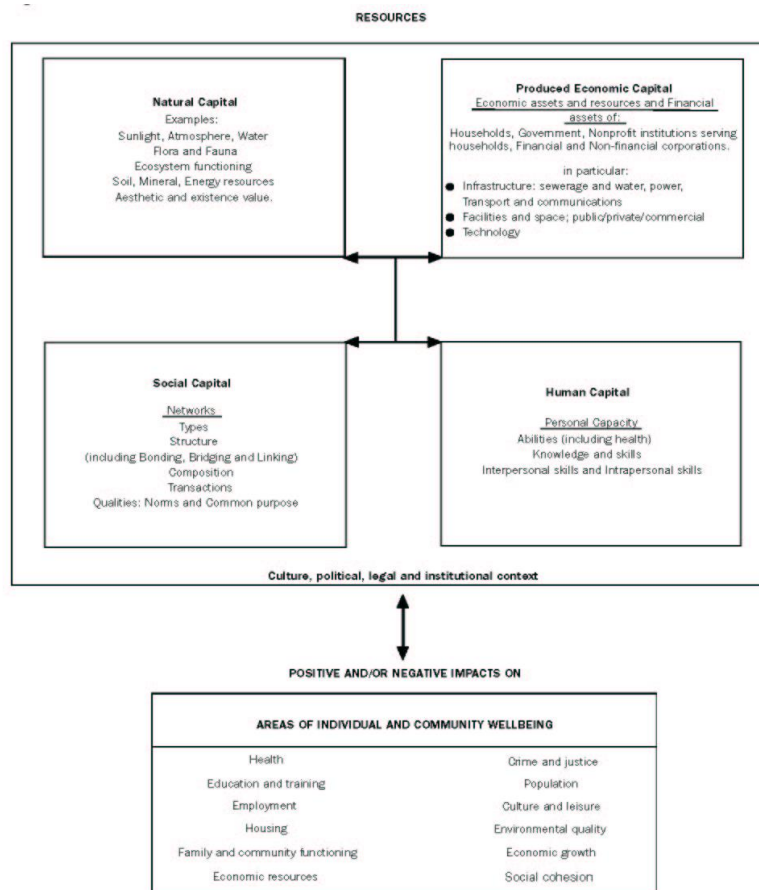
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Appendix A: ABS Social Capital Framework



(ABS, 2004, p. 35)

Appendix B: Information Sheet for Principal

Information Sheet

Title of Research: The influence of characteristics of social capital in the family unit upon the learning process of students on the Northwest Coast of Tasmania.

Dear Principal,

We would like to invite you to be part of a research study that looks at the influence of social capital upon the learning process of students along the Northwest Coast of Tasmania. The study is being conducted by:

Dr. Claire Hiller, Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Education;

Professor John Williamson, Professor of Education, Faculty of Education; and

Wayne Roberts, PhD candidate, Faculty of Education.

A considerable amount of research has been undertaken on the concept of social capital and its ramifications for individuals, communities and nations. Social capital is a complex concept but for this research is defined as the networks, together with shared norms, values and understandings which facilitate cooperation within or among groups.

This research will examine the influence of characteristics of social capital in the family unit upon the learning process of students in one school on the Northwest coast of Tasmania. It seeks to explore the role and influence of elements of social capital outcomes experienced by students through their family background such as networks, information channels created in the social structure and trust upon the formation of student identity and learning. This study is being undertaken to fulfil the requirements of a PhD

Your school has been chosen as an educational site that will be able to offer a significant contribution to this study through its geographical location, family background of students and curriculum undertaken at a Senior Secondary level. We hope to conduct this study from July 2008 to December 2008. During this time we will gather data from your school site for analysis.

We will use the following procedures for gathering data at your school, (A) one audio taped focus group interview with teachers of Senior Secondary subjects to help identify a number of students who are "typical" of the school with regard to a number of social and academic criteria; (B) questionnaires for completion by selected students who have been identified as being suitable participants for the research; (C) an audio taped individual interview with students who have been identified as being suitable participants for the research; (D) viewing participating students academic records of past achievement in Senior Secondary subjects and (E) questionnaire for parent/guardian.

It is estimated that the focus group interview with Senior Secondary teachers will take approximately 30 minutes at a time convenient to the school. The individual interview with students will take 30 minutes and will be conducted at times convenient for the school and their teachers.

We envisage no possible risks to your school, the classroom teacher or the students in this research. Should you wish to discuss problems, difficulties or concerns with us at any

time we will ensure that we are available to address them. As such we will ensure that should you agree to take part in the research project your school, teachers of Senior Secondary and student participants will be:

- Supported, should they decide to leave the research project at any given time.
- Encouraged, should they wish to inspect, add to or delete any data collected from your work site.
- Supported, should they choose to withhold any of their data from the final research project.
- Encouraged, to collaborate in the drafting and writing up of the data collected from the site.
- Encouraged, to view any work in progress.
- Encouraged, to question the researcher and ask for clarification at any given time.

We will ensure that the names of any people or places, including references to people or places that may allow identification will be removed from all data collected through a rigorous editorial process. All data collected during the research process will be stored in a locked cabinet at the Faculty of Education, University of Tasmania, where it will remain for a period of at least 5 years; after which time all data will be destroyed.

This study will be of local and national benefit, as it will assist and inform educational stakeholders in issues of curriculum design and implementation, as well as contribute to current issues of global concern regarding the state of students' physical, emotional and social well being. A report of the research findings will be made available to your school that may help with future pastoral and curriculum planning at the school.

If you would like to discuss any aspect of this study please feel free to contact either Wayne Roberts on ph 6424 7622 or Dr. Claire Hiller on ph 6226 2560. Either of us would be happy to discuss any aspect of the research with you. Once we have analysed the information we will be mailing you a summary of our findings. You are welcome to contact us at that time to discuss any issue relating to the research study.

This study has been approved by the Tasmanian Social Science Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have concerns or complaints about the conduct of this study should contact the Executive Officer of the HREC (Tasmania) Network on (03) 6226 7479 or email human.ethics@utas.edu.au. The Executive Officer is the person nominated to receive complaints from research participants. You will need to quote [*HREC project number*].

Thank you for taking the time to consider this study.

If you wish to take part in it, please sign the attached consent form.

This information sheet is for you to keep.

Dr. Claire Hiller:	Chief Investigator:
Wayne Roberts:	PhD Candidate

Appendix C: Statement of Informed Consent: (Principal)

Title of Research: The influence of characteristics of social capital in the family unit upon the learning process of students on the Northwest Coast of Tasmania.

1. I have read and understood the 'Information Sheet' for this study.
2. The nature and possible effects of the study have been explained to me.
3. I understand that the study involves the following procedures:
 - a) One focus group interview with Senior Secondary teachers and the researcher. The focus group interview will last about 30 minutes and the researcher will be asking questions focused around the idea of what constitutes the 'typical' Senior Secondary student using social and academic criteria.
 - b) Senior Secondary teachers will approach students who are defined by the focus group interview as being 'typical' of the school to invite them to participate in the research.
 - c) Observations, note taking and audio taping by the researcher during a number of Senior Secondary classes.
 - d) Questionnaires for Senior Secondary student participants in the study.
 - e) A formal one-on-one interview between a student participant and the researcher. The interview will last for approximately 30 minutes, and the researcher will be asking questions focused around the concept of social capital. The one-on-one interview will be tape-recorded and the recordings will be typed down and used in the study.
 - f) The researcher will access school data bases which record student achievement in the subject of student participants in the study.
 - g) Questionnaires to parents/guardian of Senior Secondary student participants in the study.
4. I understand that there are no potential risks for the participants in this project. However should I have any concerns I am free to raise them with the researcher.
5. I understand that all research data will be securely stored on the University of Tasmania premises for a period of 5 years. The data will be destroyed at the end of 5 years.
6. Any questions that I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction.
7. I agree that research data gathered for the study may be published provided that my school and I cannot be identified as a subject or site of research.

8. I understand that the research will maintain the confidentiality of all participants from my school community and that any information they supply to the researcher will be used only for the purpose of the research.

9. I agree that school community members may be invited to participate in this study and that they may withdraw at any time without any effect. I also understand that I am free to withdraw the school data from the research project at any time.

Name of Participant: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Statement by Investigator

☐ I have explained the project & the implications of participation in it to this volunteer and I believe that the consent is informed and that he/she understands the implications of participation

If the Investigator has not had an opportunity to talk to participants prior to them participating, the following must be ticked.

☐ The participant has received the Information Sheet where my details have been provided so participants have the opportunity to contact me prior to consenting to participate in this project.

Name of Investigator _____

Signature of
Investigator _____

Name of investigator _____

Signature of investigator _____ Date _____

Appendix D: Information Sheet for Student

Information Sheet

Title of Research: The influence of characteristics of social capital in the family unit upon the learning process of students on the Northwest Coast of Tasmania.

Dear Student,

We would like to invite you to be part of a research study that looks at the influence of social capital upon the learning process of students along the Northwest Coast of Tasmania. The study is being conducted by:

Dr. Claire Hiller, Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Education;

Professor John Williamson, Professor of Education, Faculty of Education; and

Wayne Roberts, PhD candidate, Faculty of Education.

A considerable amount of research has been undertaken on the concept of social capital and its ramifications for individuals, communities and nations. Social capital is a complex concept but for this research is defined as the networks, together with shared norms, values and understandings which facilitate cooperation within or among groups.

At a basic level social capital theory holds that relationships matter. The central idea is that social networks are a valuable asset. Interaction enables people to build communities, to commit themselves to each other, and to knit the social fabric. A sense of belonging and the concrete experience of social networks (and the relationships of trust and tolerance that can be involved) can, it is argued, bring great benefits to people.

By making connections with one another, and keeping them going over time, people are able to work together to achieve things that they either could not achieve by themselves, or could only achieve with great difficulty. People connect through a series of networks and they tend to share common values with other members of these networks; to the extent that these networks constitute a resource, they can be seen as forming a kind of capital. As well as being useful in its immediate context, this stock of capital can often be drawn on in other settings. In general, then, it follows that the more people you know, and the more you share a common outlook with them, the richer you are in social capital.

You are eligible to participate in this study because of your geographical address, family background and past academic participation in the subject of . This research will examine the influence of characteristics of social capital in the family unit upon the learning process of students on the Northwest Coast of Tasmania. It seeks to explore the role and influence of elements of social capital outcomes experienced by students through their family background such as networks, information channels created in the social structure and trust upon the formation of student identity and learning. This study is being undertaken to fulfil the requirements of a PhD

We will use the following procedures for gathering data: (a) a questionnaire for you to complete; (B) an audio taped interview with you; (C) viewing records of your past achievement in the subject of and (D) questionnaires for parent/guardian.

Attached to this information sheet is a list of the questions we will be asking during the individual interview.

We don't see any risks to you or the other students in this study. But the issues being discussed are personal and we understand that some students may feel uncomfortable talking about them. The school psychologist will also be available for you during and after the research sessions if you require someone else to discuss matters raised from the research. We will ensure that should you agree to take part in the research project you will be:

- Supported, should you decide to leave the research project at any given time.
- Encouraged, should you wish to inspect, add to or delete any data collected from your work site.
- Supported, should you choose to withhold any of your data from the final research project.
- Encouraged, to collaborate in the drafting and writing up of the data collected from your site.
- Encouraged, to view any work in progress.
- Encouraged, to question the researcher and ask for clarification at any given time.

It is important that you understand that your involvement in this study is voluntary. While we would be pleased to have you participate, we respect your right to decline. There will be no consequences to you if you decide not to participate, and this will not affect your treatment. If you decide to discontinue participation at any time, you may do so without providing an explanation. All information will be treated in a confidential manner, and your name will not be used in any publication arising out of the research. All of the research will be kept in a locked cabinet in the office of the Faculty of Education, Hobart.

If you would like to discuss any aspect of this study please feel free to contact either Wayne Roberts on ph 6424 7622 or Dr. Claire Hiller on ph 6226 2560. Either of us would be happy to discuss any aspect of the research with you. Once we have analysed the information we will be mailing you a summary of our findings. You are welcome to contact us at that time to discuss any issue relating to the research study.

This study has been approved by the Tasmanian Health and Medical Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have concerns or complaints about the conduct of this study should contact the Executive Officer of the HREC (Tasmania) Network on (03) 6226 7479 or email human.ethics@utas.edu.au. The Executive Officer is the person nominated to receive complaints from research participants. You will need to quote [*HREC project number*].

Thank you for taking the time to consider this study.

If you wish to take part in it, please sign the attached consent form.

This information sheet is for you to keep.

Dr. Claire Hiller:	Chief Investigator
Wayne Roberts:	PhD Candidate

Appendix E: Statement of Informed Consent (Student)

Research Title: The influence of characteristics of social capital in the family unit upon the learning process of students on the Northwest Coast of Tasmania.

1. I have read and understood the 'Information Sheet' for this study.
2. The study and its possible effects have been explained to me.
3. I understand that the study will involve me in:
 - (A) One questionnaire.
 - (B) An interview with the researcher of approximately 30 minutes. The interview will be tape-recorded and the recordings will be transcribed (printed word for word) and used in the study. No names will be used in the study and I will not be identifiable from the recordings.
 - (C) The researcher will watch, take notes and tape record my participation in a Senior Secondary class. The researcher will type up the tape recordings and notes and then use them in the study. No names will be used in the study and I will not be identifiable from the recordings.
 - (D) The researcher will access school data bases which record my achievement in the subject of in previous years.
4. I understand that there are no known risks. If I feel worried or uncomfortable I can talk with the researcher or the school counsellor about it.
5. I understand that the names of any people or places will be removed from all recordings and I also understand that the recordings will be kept at the University of Tasmania premises for five years. The recordings will be destroyed at the end of five years
6. I am happy that any questions I asked have been answered.
7. I agree that information about the recordings in this study may be published (provided that I am not named and no one can tell that I was in the study).

8. I understand that my identity will be kept out of the study and that anything I say to the researcher will only be used for the study.
9. I agree to take part in this study and understand that I may leave it at any time without any problems, and that I can ask that my personal recordings be taken out of the study.

Name of Participant: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Statement by Investigator

- ☐ I have explained the project & the implications of participation in it to this volunteer and I believe that the consent is informed and that he/she understands the implications of participation

If the Investigator has not had an opportunity to talk to participants prior to them participating, the following must be ticked.

- ☐ The participant has received the Information Sheet where my details have been provided so participants have the opportunity to contact me prior to consenting to participate in this project.

Name of Investigator _____

Signature of
Investigator _____

Name of investigator _____

Signature of investigator _____ Date _____

Appendix F: Information Sheet and Informed Consent (Teachers)

Information Sheet

Title of Research: The influence of characteristics of social capital in the family unit upon the learning process of students on the Northwest of Tasmania.

Dear Teacher,

We would like to invite you to be part of an exciting new research study that looks at the influence of social capital upon the learning process of students along the Northwest Coast of Tasmania. The study is being conducted by:

Dr. Claire Hiller, Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Education;

Professor John Williamson, Professor of Education, Faculty of Education;

Wayne Roberts, PhD candidate, Faculty of Education.

This study will be of local and national benefit, as it will assist and inform educational stakeholders in issues of curriculum design and implementation, as well as contribute to current issues of global concern regarding the state of students' physical, emotional and social well being. A report of the research findings will be made available to your school that will help with future pastoral and curriculum planning at the school.

A considerable amount of research has been undertaken on the concept of social capital and its ramifications for individuals, communities and nations. Social capital is a complex concept but for this research is defined as the networks, together with shared norms, values and understandings which facilitate cooperation within or among groups.

At a basic level social capital theory holds that relationships matter. The central idea is that social networks are a valuable asset. Interaction enables people to build communities, to commit themselves to each other, and to knit the social fabric. A sense of belonging and the concrete experience of social networks (and the relationships of trust and tolerance that can be involved) can, it is argued, bring great benefits to people.

By making connections with one another, and keeping them going over time, people are able to work together to achieve things that they either could not achieve by themselves, or could only achieve with great difficulty. People connect through a series of networks and they tend to share common values with other members of these networks; to the extent that these networks constitute a resource, they can be seen as forming a kind of capital. As well as being useful in its immediate context, this stock of capital can often be drawn on in other settings. In general, then, it follows that the more people you know, and the more you share a common outlook with them, the richer you are in social capital.

The students from your school are eligible to participate in this study because of their geographical address, family background and past academic participation in the subject of ?. This research will examine the influence of characteristics of social capital in the family unit upon the learning process of students on the Northwest Coast of Tasmania. It seeks to explore the role and influence of elements of social capital outcomes experienced by students through their family background such as networks, information channels created in the social structure and trust upon the formation of

student identity and learning. This study is being undertaken to fulfil the requirements of a PhD

We are seeking your help to undertake a number of important functions within the research framework. Firstly, we wish to undertake an audio taped interview with yourself to help identify a number of students who are “typical” of the school with regard to a number of social and academic criteria. Secondly, we would like you to approach “typical” students of the school with a Letter of Invitation and Information Sheet focused on the proposed study. A tick box will be used on the Letter of Invitation for students to indicate whether they are interested in participating in the research and state that they need to return the slip via the School’s administration office. The researcher will post an information package to those parents whose child expresses an interest in participating. Thirdly, I wish to observe the selected student participating in your Senior Secondary class.

It is estimated that the interviews between yourself, fellow teaching colleagues and the researcher, will take approximately 30 minutes and can be arranged for a time convenient to your work place practices. All names will be edited from audio taped interviews and classroom observations, and you will not be identifiable from the transcripts.

We will use the following procedures for gathering data with students: (A) questionnaires with selected students who have been identified as being suitable participants for the research; (B) an audio taped one-on-one interview with students who have been identified as being suitable participants for the research; (C) research of past achievement in the subject of participating students and (D) questionnaires for parent/guardian.

We envisage no possible risks to you, your school or the students in this research. However should you wish to discuss problems, difficulties or concerns with us at any time we will ensure that we are available to address them. Your participation, at an individual level must be purely voluntary in nature. We will ensure that should you agree to take part in the research project you will be:

- Supported, should you decide to leave the research project at any given time.
- Encouraged, should you wish to inspect, add to or delete any data collected from your work site.
- Supported, should you choose to withhold any of your data from the final research project.
- Encouraged, to collaborate in the drafting and writing up of the data collected from your site.
- Encouraged, to view any work in progress.
- Encouraged, to question the researcher and ask for clarification at any given time.

It is important that you understand that your involvement in this study is voluntary. While we would be pleased to have you participate, we respect your right to

decline. There will be no consequences to you if you decide not to participate, and this will not affect your treatment. If you decide to discontinue participation at any time, you may do so without providing an explanation. All information will be treated in a confidential manner, and your name will not be used in any publication arising out of the research. All of the research will be kept in a locked cabinet in the office of the Faculty of Education, Hobart.

If you would like to discuss any aspect of this study please feel free to contact either Wayne Roberts on ph 6424 7622 or Dr. Claire Hiller on ph 6226 2560. Either of us would be happy to discuss any aspect of the research with you. Once we have analysed the information we will be mailing you a summary of our findings. You are welcome to contact us at that time to discuss any issue relating to the research study.

This study has been approved by the Tasmanian Health and Medical Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have concerns or complaints about the conduct of this study should contact the Executive Officer of the HREC (Tasmania) Network on (03) 6226 7479 or email human.ethics@utas.edu.au. The Executive Officer is the person nominated to receive complaints from research participants. You will need to quote [*HREC project number*].

Thank you for taking the time to consider this study.

If you wish to take part in it, please sign the attached consent form.

This information sheet is for you to keep.

Dr. Claire Hiller: Chief Investigator

Wayne Roberts: PhD Candidate

Appendix G: Statement of Informed Consent (Teacher)

Title of Research: The influence of characteristics of social capital in the family unit upon the learning process of students on the Northwest Coast of Tasmania.

1. I have read and understood the 'Information Sheet' for this study.
2. The nature and possible effects of the study have been explained to me.
3. I understand that the study involves the following procedures:
 - a) One focus group interview with the researcher. There will be about four other teachers in the focus group interview, it will last about 30 minutes and the researcher will be asking questions focused around the idea of the 'typical' Senior Secondary student using social and academic criteria.
 - b) Approaching students who are defined by the focus group interview as being 'typical' of the school to participate in the research.
 - c) Observations, note taking and audio taping by the researcher during a number of Senior Secondary classes.
4. I understand that there are no potential risks for the participants in this project. However should I have any concerns I am free to raise them with the researcher who will address them.
5. I understand that all research data will be securely stored on the University of Tasmania premises for a period of 5 years. The data will be destroyed at the end of 5 years.
6. Any questions that I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction.
7. I agree that research data gathered for the study may be published provided that my school and I cannot be identified as a subject or site of research.
8. Copies of my interview transcript and observations of the Senior Secondary classroom will be given to me for comment and feedback.
9. I understand that I am free to withdraw my data from the research project at any time.

Name of Participant: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Statement by Investigator

☐

I have explained the project & the implications of participation in it to this volunteer and I believe that the consent is informed and that he/she understands the implications of participation

If the Investigator has not had an opportunity to talk to participants prior to them participating, the following must be ticked.

☐

The participant has received the Information Sheet where my details have been provided so participants have the opportunity to contact me prior to consenting to participate in this project.

Name of
Investigator
Signature of
Investigator

Name of investigator _____

Signature of investigator _____ Date _____

Appendix H: Information Sheet for Parent/Carer/Guardian

Title of Research: The influence of characteristics of social capital in the family unit upon the learning process of students on the Northwest Coast of Tasmania.

(Parent/Guardian)

Dear Parent/Guardian,

We would like to invite you to be part of an exciting new research study that looks at the influence of social capital upon the learning process of students along the Northwest Coast of Tasmania. The study is being conducted by:

Dr. Claire Hiller, Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Education;

Professor John Williamson, Professor of Education, Faculty of Education;

Wayne Roberts, PhD candidate, Faculty of Education.

A considerable amount of research has been undertaken on the concept of social capital and its ramifications for individuals, communities and nations. Social capital is a complex concept but for this research is defined as the networks, together with shared norms, values and understandings which facilitate cooperation within or among groups.

At a basic level social capital theory holds that relationships matter. The central idea is that social networks are a valuable asset. Interaction enables people to build communities, to commit themselves to each other, and to knit the social fabric. A sense of belonging and the concrete experience of social networks (and the relationships of trust and tolerance that can be involved) can, it is argued, bring great benefits to people.

By making connections with one another, and keeping them going over time, people are able to work together to achieve things that they either could not achieve by themselves, or could only achieve with great difficulty. People connect through a series of networks and they tend to share common values with other members of these networks; to the extent that these networks constitute a resource, they can be seen as forming a kind of capital. As well as being useful in its immediate context, this stock of capital can often be drawn on in other settings. In general, then, it follows that the more people you know, and the more you share a common outlook with them, the richer you are in social capital.

This research will examine the influence of characteristics of social capital in the family unit upon the learning process of students in one school on the Northwest Coast of Tasmania. It seeks to explore the role and influence of elements of social capital outcomes experienced by students through their family background such as networks, information channels created in the social structure and trust upon the formation of student identity and learning. This study is being undertaken to fulfil the requirements of a PhD

Your son/daughter is eligible to participate in this study because of geographical address, family background and past academic achievement in the subject of . You are invited to participate in this research through the use of the parent/guardian questionnaire to help gauge if social capital outcomes experienced by students in the family unit influences the formation of student identity and learning.

We will use the following procedures for gathering data from your son/daughter: (a) a questionnaire for you to complete; (B) an audio taped interview with your son/daughter; (C) research of your past achievement in the subject of and (D) questionnaire for you to complete. Attached to this information sheet is a list of the questions I will be asking your son/daughter during the interview.

We don't see any risks to you or your son/daughter in this study. But the issues being discussed are personal and we understand that some students may feel uncomfortable talking about them. The school psychologist will also be available for your son/daughter during and after the research sessions if they require someone else to discuss matters raised from the research.

It is important that you understand that your involvement and your son's/daughter's involvement in this study is voluntary. While we would be pleased to have you and your son's/daughter's participate, we respect your right to decline. There will be no consequences to you if you decide not to participate, and this will not affect your son's/daughter's treatment at the school. If you or your son/daughter decides to discontinue participation at any time, you may do so without providing an explanation. All information will be treated in a confidential manner, and your name along with son/daughter's name will not be used in any publication arising out of the research. All of the research will be kept in a locked cabinet in the office of the Faculty of Education, Hobart.

If you would like to discuss any aspect of this study please feel free to contact either Wayne Roberts on ph 6424 7622 or Dr. Claire Hiller on ph 6226 2560. Either of us would be happy to discuss any aspect of the research with you. Once we have analysed the information we will be mailing you a summary of our findings. You are welcome to contact us at that time to discuss any issue relating to the research study.

This study has been approved by the Tasmanian Health and Medical Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have concerns or complaints about the conduct of this study should contact the Executive Officer of the HREC (Tasmania) Network on (03) 6226 7479 or email human.ethics@utas.edu.au. The Executive Officer is the person nominated to receive complaints from research participants. You will need to quote [*HREC project number*].

Thank you for taking the time to consider this study.

If you wish to take part in it, please sign the attached consent form.

This information sheet is for you to keep.

Dr. Claire Hiller: Chief Investigator

Wayne Roberts: PhD Candidate

Appendix I: CONSENT FORM for Parent/Carer/Guardian

(Parent/Carer)

Research Title: The influence of characteristics of social capital in the family unit upon the learning process of students on the Northwest Coast of Tasmania.

1. I have read and understood the 'Information Sheet' for this study.
2. The nature and possible effects of the study have been explained to me.
3. I understand that the study will involve my child in the following procedures:
 - a) One questionnaire.
 - b) A formal one-on-one interview with the researcher. The interview will last for approximately 30 minutes, and the researcher will be asking questions focused around the concept of social capital. The one-on-one interview will be tape-recorded and the recordings will be typed down and used in the study. No names will be used in the study and I will not be identifiable from the recordings.
 - c) The researcher will watch, take notes and tape record your child's participation in a Senior Secondary class. The researcher will type up the tape recordings and notes and then use them in the study. No names will be used in the study and we will not be identifiable from the recordings.
 - d) The researcher will access school data bases which record your achievement in the subject of in previous years.
 - e) A questionnaire will be given for me to complete as a parent/carers of a Senior Secondary student, regarding issues associated with social capital.
4. I understand there are no known risks. However should my child feel concerned they can talk with the researcher, or the school counsellor.
5. I understand that the names of any people or places will be removed from all data collected. I also understand that all research data will be securely stored on the University of Tasmania premises for a period of 5 years. The data will be destroyed at the end of 5 years.
6. Any questions that I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction.
7. I agree that information gathered for the study may be published (provided that I and my child cannot be identified as participants).
8. I understand that my identity and my child's identity will be kept confidential and any information my child or I supply to the researcher will be used only for the purposes of the research.
9. I agree to participate in this study and understand that I may withdraw at any time without problems, and I may request that my personal data gathered be withdrawn from the research.

10. I agree to give permission for my child to participate in this study and understand that I may withdraw them at any time without problems, and I may request that their personal data be withdrawn from the study.

Name of Participant: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Statement by Investigator

☐ I have explained the project & the implications of participation in it to this volunteer and I believe that the consent is informed and that he/she understands the implications of participation

If the Investigator has not had an opportunity to talk to participants prior to them participating, the following must be ticked.

☐ The participant has received the Information Sheet where my details have been provided so participants have the opportunity to contact me prior to consenting to participate in this project.

Name of Investigator _____

Signature of
Investigator _____

Name of investigator _____

Signature of investigator _____ Date _____

Appendix J: Focus Group Interview Schedule for Teachers

1. Which Senior Subjects subject has the most students?
2. Does the student population in the respective Senior Secondary subjects vary from year to year?
3. Is it possible to define the typical social and economic background of Senior Secondary student attending the college?
4. What types of sports are popular amongst the Senior Secondary students?
5. What types of clubs and societies do the Senior Secondary students at the college participate?
6. What are some of the academic and social characteristics of students who are not achieving in Senior Secondary at the college?
7. What are some of the academic and social characteristics of students who are achieving to a high level in Senior Secondary subject at the college?
8. What are some of the academic and social characteristic of students who represent the typical student undertaking a Senior Secondary subject at the college?

Appendix K: One-on-One Interview Schedule with Students

1. How would you describe yourself so I can get to know you better?
2. What do you want to do with your life when you are older?
3. What are some of the things you chose to do in your spare time?
4. What type of social activities do you undertake with your family?
5. What values and behaviours are important to you?
6. What do you think are some of the influences upon the development of your personal values and behaviours?
7. Do you think your personal values and behaviour differ between school and where you live?
8. What type of attitude do you think your parents/guardians have towards school?
9. Have your parents/guardians provided any guidance to you about the subjects you should study at school?
10. Do you think that some of the subjects you are studying are more important than others?
11. How would you describe your past participation and achievement in these subjects at school?
12. How would you describe factors that have influenced your participation and achievement in the subject of English in the past?
13. How would you describe yourself as a student in the Senior Secondary classroom?
14. How do you feel when other students talk about their achievements in the senior secondary classroom?

Appendix L: Observational Schedule

Social Capital Groupings	Not evident/evident/very evident/and associated Elements Examples/notes
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1. Network qualities

- Trust and trustworthiness
- Sense of efficacy
- Acceptance of diversity and inclusiveness

2. Network structure

- Size
- Communication mode
- Power relationships

3. Network transactions

- Sharing support
- Sharing knowledge and information

4. Network types

- Bonding
- Bridging
- Linking

Appendix M: Social Capital Questionnaire (Parent)

Social Capital Questionnaire (Parent)

Social Capital

(Parent)

INTRODUCTION TO THE SURVEY

Thank you for participating in this survey. In this study, we are interested in the influence of characteristics of Social Capital in the family unit upon the literacy learning process of students on the Northwest Coast of Tasmania.

Please accept our assurance that all this information will be kept strictly confidential and responses will not be identified by name. Once you have completed your survey, place in an envelope and seal it for return to the researchers.

Please answer every question as truthfully and honestly as you can. The survey will take 30 to 40 minutes to complete.

A. DEMOGRAPHICS - Items 1 to 14 ***Some questions about you***

In the following questions please tick the most appropriate response (or write in an answer in the questions with dots)

1. What is your gender? ☐ 1. Female
 ☐ 2. Male
2. Are you employed? ☐ Yes If yes, how many hours per week.....
 ☐ No
3. What is your age in years? (optional)years
4. What is the Postcode of your home address?
5. Are you living in: ☐ 1. Private house, flat, unit
 ☐ 2. Public housing
 ☐ 3. Other
6. Are you renting your accommodation?
 ☐ 1. Yes
 ☐ 2. No
7. How long have you lived in your local area?years
8. Who do you live with?

- ☐ 1. alone
- ☐ 2. partner
- ☐ 3. children
- ☐ 4. partner and children
- ☐ 5. extended or blended family
- ☐ 6. friends
- ☐ 7. other

9. Do you have children 18 years of age or under?

- ☐ Yes If yes, How many under school age
How many school age to 18.....
- ☐ No

10. What language do you prefer to speak at home?

- ☐ English
- ☐ Other

11. Are you an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander? ☐ No ☐ Yes

12. What is the main source of income for your household?

- ☐ 1. Wages or Salary
- ☐ 2. Pension or benefit
- ☐ 3. Other

13. What is your current income? (optional)

- ☐ 1. Less than \$10,000
- ☐ 2. \$10,001 to \$19,999
- ☐ 3. \$20,000 to \$39,999
- ☐ 4. \$ 40,000 to \$59,999
- ☐ 5. \$ 60,000 to \$79,999
- ☐ 6. \$ 80,000 to \$99,999
- ☐ 7. \$ 100,000 +

14. What are your qualifications?

- ☐ 1. Year Ten or equivalent
- ☐ 2. Year Twelve or equivalent
- ☐ 3. TAFE Certificate or Diploma (or equivalent)
- ☐ 4. Degree or Post Graduate

B. Social Capital - Items 15 to 39

We are interested in your opinions about the following statements. Read each statement carefully and decide how you feel about it.

- If you Strongly Agree, circle 1
- If you Agree, circle 2
- If you are Undecided, circle 3
- If you Disagree, circle 4
- If you Strongly Disagree, circle 5

15. I feel valued by my local community?

Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree

1	2	3	4	5
16. I believe people need to take greater responsibility for the local physical environment?				
Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5
17. I believe that by helping others you help yourself in the long run.				
Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5
18. I believe that members of a community should volunteer to help local groups.				
Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5
19. I feel safe living in my neighbourhood?				
Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5
20. I believe that most people can be trusted?				
Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5
21. I believe that if someone's car breaks down outside my house, I should invite them into my home to use the phone.				
Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5
22. If I were caring for a child and needed to go out for a while, I would ask a neighbour for help.				
Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5
23. I feel it is important to support local community events (e.g., church fete, school concert, craft exhibition)?				
Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5
24. I believe it is important to be an active member of a local organisation or club (e.g., sport, craft, social club)?				
Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5
25. I believe that my local community located on the Northwest coast of Tasmania feels like home?				
Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5
26. I believe it is important to maintain regular weekly contact with close friends?				
Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5
27. I believe it is important to maintain regular weekly contact with family members, who do not live with me?				

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5

28. If I have a sick neighbour I would do a favour to help them?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5

29. I believe it is important to be involved in the management committee for local groups or organisations?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5

30. I feel parents and children must stay together, as much as possible?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5

31. I can attain my personal goals by working for my community's goals?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5

32. I respect the majority's wishes in groups of which I am a member?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5

33. I trust the local council?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5

34. I trust the state parliament?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5

35. I trust the legal system?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5

36. I trust the school my child attends?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5

37. I believe it is important to achieve in all academic subjects at school?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5

Appendix N: Social Capital Questionnaire (Student)

Social Capital Questionnaire (Student)

INTRODUCTION TO THE SURVEY

Thank you for participating in this survey. In this study, we are interested in the influence of characteristics of Social Capital in the family unit upon the literacy learning process of students on the Northwest Coast of Tasmania.

Please accept our assurance that all this information will be kept strictly confidential and responses will not be identified by name. Once you have completed your survey, place in an envelope and seal it for return to the researchers.

Please answer every question as truthfully and honestly as you can. The survey will take 30 to 40 minutes to complete.

A. Social Capital - Items 1 to 23

We are interested in your opinions about the following statements. Read each statement carefully and decide how you feel about it.

- If you strongly agree, circle 1
- If you agree, circle 2
- If you are undecided, circle 3
- If you disagree, circle 4
- If you strongly disagree, circle 5

1. I believe people need to take greater responsibility for the local physical environment?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5

2. I believe that by helping others you help yourself in the long run.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5

3. I believe that people should volunteer to be involved in local groups and sport organisations?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5

4. I believe that members of a community should volunteer to help local groups.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5

5. I feel safe living in my neighbourhood?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5

6. I believe that most people can be trusted?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5

7. I believe that if someone's car breaks down outside my house, I should invite them into my home to use the phone.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5

8. If I were caring for a child and needed to go out for a while, I would ask a neighbour for help.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5

9. I feel it is important to support local community events (e.g., school concert, craft exhibition)?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5

10. I believe it is important to be an active member of a local organisation or club (e.g., sport, craft, social club)?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5

11. I believe that my local community located on the Northwest coast of Tasmania feels like home?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5

12. I believe it is important to maintain regular weekly contact with close friends?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5

13. I believe it is important to maintain regular weekly contact with family members, who do not live with me?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5

14. Family members should stick together, no matter what sacrifices are required?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5

15. I can attain my personal goals by working for my community's goals?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5

16. I respect the majority's wishes in groups of which I am a member?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5

17. I trust the local council?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5

18. I trust the state parliament?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5

19. I trust the legal system?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5

20. I trust the school I attend?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5

21. I believe it is important to achieve in all academic subjects at school?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5